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GEORGE MOORE

by James Whitall

The death of George Moore sends my thoughts back to an afternoon in May of 1914. My wife and I stood on the deck of a liner with Berenson, who was returning to Florence after Heaven knew what mysterious goings-on in the art sanctums of America; we were bound for England. When the whistle relinquished its grip on our diaphragms, he turned to me and asked, "What are you really going to England for?" I answered that I wanted to meet George Moore and live in an atmosphere conducive to writing, whereupon our distinguished friend gave us the benefit of his opinion of the younger English writers, and strolled off with a glance at the skyscrapers which seemed to lean closer and closer together as we moved away from them. "Looks like Bagdad on a raft, doesn't it?" he said over his shoulder. . . . His last words to me before we left the ship at Plymouth were: "Ebury Street, yes, but for God's sake keep out of Bloomsbury."

Two weeks later we were driving down Victoria Street towards the seclusion of an old Queen Anne house in Chelsea. I had asked the driver to go through Ebury Street, but in spite my best efforts I caught no glimpse of what Max Beerbohm and William Orpen had prepared me to expect in the way of sloping shoulders, drooping moustache, chubby hands, and a striking similarity to a chestnut-worm. I witnessed the leisurely emergence upon their immaculate doorsteps of several middle-aged gentlemen with "buttonholes" and varnished boots, but they either had square shoulders or were accompanied by dogs, and I knew enough to eliminate them at once.

After a few minutes of May sunlight on the waters of the Thames we drew up at the door of 18 Cheyne Row, and from that moment the enfolding peace of Chelsea began to enter my mind and body. The idea that Carlyle had lived and worked in a house a few doors away was all very well, but what really counted was the fact that writers and painters were living and working there then, in 1914. It was the continuation of the past

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into the present that fascinated me; the peace I speak of was not that of a graveyard or a museum; I had not chosen to live in Chelsea merely because of the past, but because the past was repeating itself. All about me people were working, talking, and drinking their tea in old panelled rooms whose walls had glowed with the flickering light of little coal fires for more than two hundred years, and whose floors had felt the tread of many a famous pair of feet. There was a spell upon me; the reality had proved ten times more enchanting than the dream, and my enthusiasm was beyond reason. I *liked* the damp smell that came off the river; I didn't *want* any ice-water; I didn't mind being hot in front and cold behind (fires had to be lit in our grates that Whitsuntide); I didn't care whether the sun shone or not—Chelsea looked prettier when it didn't; what was it to me if smuts flew in at the windows or if cocktails came ready-mixed in bottles?

Four months were gone before I knew it. I had some work to occupy me when I was not wandering about the old streets dreaming of the days when Chelsea was a village near London, and I consoled myself for the sad fact that I was still without sight or sound of George Moore by imagining him in Ireland for the summer. One autumn evening I sat in my study (we had taken another house, this time in the King's Road) waiting for my wife to join me. We had been bidden to a party at the Hutchinsons, from whom we had rented the Cheyne Row house, and had I known to whom within that very hour I would be talking there would have been small chance of my indulging in tranquil contemplation of a dying fire. We turned away from the King's Road, walked through Glebe Place, past Henry VIII's little hunting lodge, unused and peaceful under tall trees, and were soon upon the well known door-step. There were fifteen or twenty guests already assembled, and I was introduced to Henry Tonks, the painter, a haggard, cross-looking man, but an extremely witty one. I stood for a while listening to his fulminations on the subject of modern art and noticing his acceptance of the laughter his outburst occasioned as the best evidence of his hearers' agreement. Suddenly he addressed a question to our hostess, and her affirmative reply immediately thronged my mind with images: a young man working in Julien's studio in Paris; a slightly older man driving with Doris in an out-of-date carriage through the olive orchards of Orelay; a still older man in Dublin, talking of names, inheritance, and destiny with Honor on the eve of her journey back to Texas; and yet an older one, working and dreaming of the past among his books and pictures in Ebury Street. So that I was in a sense prepared when, from my place by the sliding doors, I actually saw George Moore as he passed along the narrow entrance hall towards the stairway.

His arrival had been noted by everyone, and the single syllable of his surname sounded like *Mwah* as it came to my ears out of the noticeably increased buzzing of the conversation. As he entered the rooms several moments later and greeted his host and hostess, the sound of voices faded, but after the few seconds it took me to discover that my preconception of his appearance was exact but for his almost white hair, and that to speak of his similarity to a chestnut-worm was absurd, it resumed its former volume. At that point I must have said something hysterical to Mary Hutchinson to the effect that this was why I had come to England, for, after allowing her celebrated guest to finish a conversation with Tonks, she took me over to him.

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"Here's an American admirer. Mr. George Moore. Mr. Whitall."

"How d'you do."

The effort of having to choose an opening remark with so little preparation almost took away my voice, but I came through with a suitable understatement.

"I've come from America with the hope of meeting you."

"That is very flattering."

"I don't think I am a flatterer."

"I have always found Americans charming. Somehow I always get on well with them. Many who are strangers to me write me delightful letters about my books and quite a few of my friends are countrymen of yours."

I could not bring myself to utter a word about his books so I ventured to tell him I wanted to write and that I had done some translating as I had nothing to write about.

"You couldn't do a better thing and don't be apologetic, for translating is very difficult. At its best, it is re-creation. Pater was a beautiful translator. What have you been translating?" I told him it was Judith Gautier's Chinese lyrics, and his comment was characteristic. "Ah, yes, Judith Gautier. I knew her long ago in Paris. She wrote a book about her affair with Wagner, but I'm sure she knew nothing of Chinese. Perhaps a Chinese lover. . . ."

My time was up; we were interrupted. Our conversation had been slight, but it seemed to me that he had been much more than polite, and I was convinced of this when, as we were leaving, he laid a hand on my arm and said: "I should like one day to see your translations. Perhaps I could help you with them." This time I failed lamentably to do justice to the occasion, for all I could say was: "Good-night and thank you a thousand times."

On the way home through the quiet streets I sank from high elation to the despairing thought that I might never see George Moore again, but as we entered our house I was able to take a sensibly moderate view of the possibilities. Three days of pleasurable suspense followed, during which I thought seriously of accepting his offer literally and either writing or going bravely to 121 Ebury Street, and I had almost worked myself up to the point of adopting the latter plan when a protracted ringing of our doorbell, followed by a slow, heavy tread along the hall and up the staircase, solved my difficulty. The door of our drawing-room opened and the maid announced: "Mr. George Moore."

He was affability itself and I need hardly say that I was, as the French say, in all my states. In only one respect did our reception of this inexplicable visit leave anything to be desired. Before we ourselves knew who was mounting our stairs, we were horrified to hear from the direction of our Scottie's basket by the fire a hoarse growl of unmistakable antagonism; an alien influence was drawing near. Tammas's personal reaction was of course entirely justifiable in view of our distinguished visitor's legendary objection to the presence of dogs in London, but the promptness with which he took up his unfortunate attitude (he maintained it stubbornly for eleven years) was uncanny. It cost him his place by the fire, for our cajolings, augmented I may say by Moore himself who really had no objections to dogs as dogs, availed nothing, and, the evening being ill-suited to a tussle with that bristling little Scotsman, I hurried him off to the kitchen.

On my way up to the drawing-room again I tried with small success to account for the astonishing fact of Moore's presence in my own house. A specific reason for it would

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soon emerge, I had no doubt, but what on earth could it be? My wife was explaining in outline the life and worship of the American Quaker as I re-entered the room, and Moore was clearly fascinated, plying her with questions as to ritual and creed and seeming both surprised and pleased to find how little Quakerism contained of either. I sat quietly on the couch beside him, taking in his carefully polished tan boots, his brown suit, his soft-collared pink shirt and maroon tie, his rosy complexion and his deep, rather pleasant speech in which the blunt Irish note was only audible when he used words with *ou* in them. His inflexion was, however, very noticeably Irish and it enchanted me. The occasional accent may have been the fading imprint of Mayo, his native county.

Suddenly he turned to me:—

"Well, my friend, I think I have hit upon an idea for you. Did you read my story in *The English Review* called *Euphorion in Texas*?"

"Of course I did."

"Well, you see I told practically nothing of Honor's own story. I was only concerned with its culminating episode: her journey to Dublin to be put in the family way by me, which would enable her to give a Literature to Texas. But I can see a whole book about her as a girl and then as a young woman who read my writings and concluded that I was the sort of man she wanted for the father of her child. You know your own country and could tell her story, writing in the first person and putting her name to the book. I would be glad to help you in any way I could, and perhaps we could call it *How Literature Came to Texas*."

I suppose the reader can imagine me floundering for adequate words. George Moore was suggesting a collaboration, perhaps a lopsided one but still a collaboration. My mind simply refused to accept the full meaning of his proposal and, in my bemusement, I mumbled that he was too kind. Then one of his fat little hands began to revolve slowly from the wrist and he went on as though I had not spoken, which indeed I scarcely had.

"I can see several chapters about her reading of my books; *Evelyn Innes* and *Sister Teresa* would make a deep impression on her. You might even have her go into a convent, and the thought of my story *The Lovers of Orelay* could be made the reason for her finding she did not have a vocation. Ah, my friend, that young woman's career is worth many books. I could not write of her except as I have written. I am too involved in her destiny. Only last week I had a letter from her. You shall read it if you decide to do what I suggest. Well," he rose suddenly from the couch, "think it over and come to see me on Sunday at eleven." I helped him with his coat downstairs and found myself able to express something of what I felt. We talked for a moment at the door and I got it clear in my mind that he would let me use his name and those of his books in writing Honor's story.

I LAY awake most of that night in complete bewilderment. Was there such a person in Texas, and if so, why should he suggest *my* writing her story? If not, why the attempt to convince me of her existence and of his involvement in her destiny? I had a suspicion I would never see that letter from her and that I was on the point of becoming a participant in one of Moore's characteristic elaborations of an affair that had never taken place, for I knew that I would accept his proposal. I would have been a fool not to. The opportunity had been offered me, from whatever motives, to write a book under the direction and with the help of one of the

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greatest living English stylists—perhaps the greatest. It was inconceivable that a youthful nobody like myself, feeling the way I did about Moore's writing and longing for guidance, should hesitate for as much as a second. It was really no concern of mine if, when the tale was written, its publication should help to refute the popular belief that Moore was one of those who "did not kiss, but told". Whether or not the book ever reached the dignity of print, its writing would be an incalculably valuable experience, and Sunday morning found me seated at the dining table in Ebury Street, a contract spread out before me on the red cloth cover. *How Literature Came to Texas* was to be completed in one year, and the moneys accruing from its publication were to be divided equally between us. We both signed two copies of the agreement, and after some further discussion as to procedure—I was to come for advice as often as I liked and every fortnight or so he would go over with me what I had written—he asked me to come up to his bedroom while he shaved and dressed; he was lunching with an old friend.

I took a moment to look at the Morisot and the David opposite the fireplace, and the Manet portrait of Madame Manet over the sideboard. He smiled with pleasure at my ecstatic admiration of the latter and hinted that there was another very special picture in the room above, so we climbed the stairs past innumerable drawings by Ingres and Degas, and I was presently standing on his famous Aubusson carpet before Monet's picture of trees rising out of mist in a flooded meadow. I could only say that I thought it was beautiful; I knew nothing about pictures, really, and I was approaching the point where I would have to rush off and tell someone of all that had happened and all that I had seen. I felt I could bear no more, but we mounted another flight to his bedroom for the laborious ceremony of shaving at an old-fashioned wash-stand, after which came an upsetting moment when it was difficult to identify the stoutish pear-shaped man in bright blue underwear, struggling to get into a pair of grey striped trousers, with the famous Irish *prosateur*.

Once again in the dining-room, Moore rang for his parlour-maid who hurried up from the lower regions to tie his tie for him (I had been wondering why he came down with coat and vest open and tie in hand), and during this homely operation I mentioned, in all innocence, that I had recently seen Henry James on the Embankment. An expression of great annoyance at once came over his face; he flung out his arms and raised his shoulders while the parlour-maid stood patiently aside, her ministrations incomplete.

"How anyone can read that man's novels is beyond my understanding. He never lets his characters make clear statements, to say nothing of actions. They move in a mist of wordiness and indecision. And that interminable strolling on terraces; you'll find more terraces in the novels of Henry James, my friend, than in the whole of England."

It was impossible not to laugh, but my amusement was a little damped by the fear that he might ask whether I liked *The Wings of the Dove*. The parlour-maid was working at his tie again and Moore kept muttering: "Wormwood, wormwood. His writing is like wormwood." Then suddenly and with a sheepish smile: "But he could write an article. Yes, he could write an article."

So BEGAN a friendship which was to last eleven years and prove, in one way at least, the most important relationship of my years in England.

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The following, from one of his early letters, gives an idea of the way he expected our partnership to function: "Of course my name would not appear in the collaboration. Nothing is pleasanter than collaboration if the man who smokes the cigarette doesn't try to take the pen out of the other fellow's hand. This is the proper division of labour; a cigarette for one and a pen for the other, and the Cigarette can help the Pen, if the Pen can write, much more than many people think for." The hours in Ebury Street which we spent as pupil-writer and master-collaborator were generally Sunday morning hours, when he, for no pious reason, was not working. There were occasions when great chunks of my manuscript were read in my presence and scrapped, and only rarely had I the effrontery to think the scrapped version better than his suggested revision, but the usual procedure was for him to work over my pages with his pencil at his leisure. In this way his help was far more valuable, and I was given at the same time an intimate exhibition of his method of composition. Now and then he wrote me the ideas that occurred to him, often repeating or contradicting his verbal advice.

Sunday, Westport Lodge,
Westport, Ireland

DEAR MR. WHITALL,

I had to leave London for fresh air and idleness. As soon as I had put the last pages of the Brook of the Chareth upon paper I started for Ireland and have found a quiet dozing summer time.

I am glad to hear that you have been pushing ahead and shall be much interested in your twenty thousand words and my mind will be free to enjoy them. It seems to me that an amusing chapter might be written on Honor reading my books—the ones she does not care about and those that stir her. For an event the announcement of a new book might suit the trend of the story—the title would evoke different emotions—the first emotions—the second and then the third emotions; incoherent and contradictory are her emotions. Her waiting for the postman's knock and the inquiry "Jane, any letters or parcel for me", and again and again the disappointing "No Miss, nothing this morning, No Miss, nothing this evening." At last the book arrives "Memoirs of my Dead Life". I imagine quite a long bit about this book, two or three pages perhaps more, and then her emotions culminating in the "Lovers of Orelay". But Honor being *essentially moral* does not readily understand Doris who, apparently only went to Orelay for her own personal pleasure. But how much greater the story would be if she had gone to Orelay urged by a moral idea. At first it seems impossible to discover any one except perhaps the inspiration of a masterpiece. The story is very beautiful but it is no more than a short story, Honor would like a volume to her self, two or three volumes, an epic, a tragedy, a narrative in blank verse or in rhymed couplet, which? She would not be satisfied with less nor would she consider her conduct justified if she did not succeed in inspiring the work of a life time. But this isn't possible. G. M. has written many books and these were inspired by —by whom? Jealous motive soon dissolving into contemplation. Texas is without a literature. Projects to create a literature. She has read that schools are powerless to produce literature. At last while walking in the garden or lying between sleeping and waking the thought descends that if she were to marry G. M. she might give birth to a son who—visions—question, would he write in prose or in verse. But he might not marry her. Perhaps, but she might go to see him. How? by taking the steamer. Of course she would bring one of her sisters with her? They both wanted a change. Her sister would be very much in the way . . . the project matures and difficulties vanish one by one and the day dawns when she bids her sisters good bye.

You may be able to make something out of this—it may strike your fancy, if it does so much the better.

I hope to be in London early next month and I shall look forward to seeing you. With kind regards to your wife

Ever yours,

GEORGE MOORE

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121 Ebury Street

I like our book. You have improved your first draft enormously but you fall into staccato which is always bad and especially bad in this book for it spoils the character, *a meditative mind and staccato rhythms are incompatible.* It seems to me necessary to translate the scene in which she goes to church into a slower rhythm. She seems to be hopping. If you realise what I mean it can be soon done. Can you call here on Monday before five?

as ever,

GEORGE MOORE

121 Ebury Street,
London, S. W.
September 6th, 1915

DEAR MR. WHITALL,

It grieves me very much to find myself always unable to get down to see you in Surrey and long ago I promised my printers to visit them and that, too, distresses me; but your questions I can easily answer regarding Honor.

The easiest narrative will be that she should read an interview, in which my house in Dublin is somewhat elaborately described, and that she should get out at Cork and travel up to Dublin through the pretty summer weather noticing the kine knee-deep in the grass, and the clouds moving slowly, but too much occupied with her own thoughts to notice much else. You can easily imagine her unconscious of the green country unfolding before her eyes as the train speeds on and she absorbed her heroic mission.

I think that her first impression of the author need not be too favourable. A man about fifty years of age might surprise her, she probably expected a younger man and a better looking man. Anyhow, there is plenty of room for a display of fancy. She would view him in one light and then in another light and then in a third light and a fourth and a fifth and so on, till the time came for her to dress for dinner and then her toilet would again give you an opportunity of interesting your readers. What shoes! what stockings! what drawers! what chemise! what dress! A world of speculation tempered by Honor's Quakerisms. It might be advisable for you to go to Gorringe's or perhaps Selfridge's and study underclothing. Honor's Quakerisms would revolt against the finery she has brought over with her from New York but after all, this finery is only a means to an end.

I have just got a letter from a lady lecturing me very severely because I wrote saying I could not go down to the country for three days and in the end perhaps I shall have to go but I hope to be able to resist her and her companions.

With kind regards to Mrs. Whitall,

yours sincerely,

GEORGE MOORE

MOORE was not an exacting friend, but he required a certain amount of coddling from time to time. I could offer him appreciation of his writings with ease and pleasure, but I found it very difficult to cope with his tirades against certain members of his profession, for he demanded agreement and sulked dreadfully if he did not get it. Nevertheless, my wife and I got on surprising well with him, and though it was rarely possible to fit him into a conventional social scheme (his virulent attacks on the Church of Rome and his crusade against canine pollution of the London streets had become a terror to many hostesses), to listen when he elected to play his chosen rôle of tale-teller was an enchantment.

Of course it was more than worth while to put up with his obsessions and his cantankerous obtrusion of them at the very worst possible moments. When the atmosphere was one in which he was entirely free to state that God was a biscuit or that Henry James's books were like wormwood, his hand would begin to describe slow circles and he would hold us spell-bound till long past midnight with some story that was simmering in his mind for future writing; but let a member of the Roman Catholic Church or a devotee of James be of the company and he would wreck the evening with whichever of his manias suited the occasion.

Once his baiting provoked a brave and

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bitter resistance, and I remember that Moore rose suddenly from his chair and said good-night, withdrawing from an argument over the writings of James at what was probably its hottest moment. The explanation of such an unprecedented retirement could only have been that his feelings were hurt, for I had never known him to accept defeat, however overwhelmingly he might have been defeated.

I finished my novel in a little over a year. Our collaboration had not been without its difficulties, but none of them had been serious. I had given in to him continually, as it was altogether fitting that I should do, and I had learned something of the writing of English. We had given Honor a Quaker birth and early training. She went as a young girl to live with a Catholic aunt in Maryland, entered a convent and left it to return to Texas and run a country store. Books were added to the stock and she began to give literary talks at the Town Hall. Moore's writings took possession of her mind and she soon became obsessed by the idea that she had a mission to fulfill. She would go to Dublin and inform George Moore of the part she wished him to play in the accomplishment of her destiny. The closing chapters dealt with her few weeks in Dublin. Moore was more than acquiescent and I tried to envelop their unusual affair in an atmosphere of high literary exaltation. Honor returned to Texas to bear the son who would give a Literature to her native state.

We had decided that Honor should tell her story in a series of letters to her aunt in Maryland, long letters of self-justification with a short one at the end begging to be taken in with her infant son until the scandal in Texas had subsided. The novel was a bad first effort, but its badness gave it the quality of authenticity; the writing was as full of Moore as Honor's would have been.

The manuscript was promptly accepted by two publishers—one in London and one in New York—and I lived for a week in high elation. I felt as though I had won a literary prize with a laboriously prepared college thesis, and of course there was the added possibility of the public being successfully hoaxed. I was, however, to find that the satisfaction of having written a book under the guidance of George Moore was all I would get out of that year's work; and though I soon came to regard this as an ample reward, I could not take a sane view of the situation until some weeks after the miserable Sunday morning when my eminent friend categorically refused to allow publication. I had been prepared for trouble of some sort by people who knew Moore better than I did, but I found this no alleviation. Nothing I could say had the slightest effect; my protests eventually faded away in my throat before his vacant-eyed disinclination to discuss the matter, and a cold silence rose between us.

I shall never know what caused this unpredictable repudiation of our understanding. From our unpleasant final conversation I gathered that some friend had convinced him that the publication of my manuscript would damage his reputation, but he kept insisting that, though I had done my work well, its appearance in print would do *me* a lot of harm. He said that I would be well advised to re-write my book, invent an author for the purpose, and change the locale.

Publication was obviously out of the question: I had really no intention of making an enemy of George Moore. His friendship was far more valuable to me than the perpetration of a literary joke, and a few royalties. So I put aside the manuscript of Honor's story, and it now rests (due to financial stress) in Dr. Rosenbach's extraordinary vault, a Moore "item" of special interest, including many

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pages bearing his pencilled corrections, our contract and a sheaf of his letters.

In a few weeks the silence was broken. Moore was incorrigible, as usual; no shadow of regret tinged his rare references to our still-born project—rare because I never allowed myself to be drawn when he ventured: "You did well, my friend, to relinquish the idea of publishing that story." I firmly refused him either agreement or disagreement, and the episode, deprived of the nourishment of mutual discussion, eventually faded out of his talk altogether.

THE pleasure I had in our relationship during my remaining ten years in England heavily overbalanced any difficulties. A boring visit was always followed by two or three delightful ones, and an invitation to dine in Ebury Street—perhaps of the eleventh-hour variety, due to the arrival of a leg of lamb from Ireland—was an unfailing guarantee of Moore at his very best. On one such evening he read us an unbelievably beautiful passage from the manuscript of *Héloïse and Abélard*, describing a rain-storm in a forest near the Loire; and three days later he tried to steal our French cook from us by offering her an extra five shillings a week. This amused me more than it did my wife, but she forgave him the following week, after a visit which showed us an entirely unguessed phase of his character, and having in the meantime assured herself of Marie's disinclination to "make a change".

On this occasion a very preoccupied Moore was shown up to our drawing-room. No "how d'you do", but a request for writing paper. He sat down and began a letter at once, and I presently noticed big tears falling from his cheeks onto the paper. When he had finished he read us the few paragraphs, sealed and stamped his letter, said good-night in a choked voice, and withdrew. The name on the envelope was that of a young woman in whose welfare Moore had a deep paternal interest; she was threatened with tuberculosis and his tear-stained pages besought her to go to Switzerland without delay, for in no other way could she be cured. The unexpectedness of that half hour and the genuine feeling behind his plea moved us intensely at the time, but I must admit that I subsequently questioned his sincerity. He was a consummate actor in the sense that he could convince himself of anything.

I was many times made fully aware of the fact that Moore was well versed in the art of husbanding his resources. One night during the time when frequent air-raids necessitated darkened streets, he arrived in a stamping fury at the authorities for dimming lights and thereby endangering the lives of pedestrians, and at the absurd inadequacy of buses as a means of transportation anyway. It was soon disclosed to us that he had, in the semi-darkness on the bus-top, given the conductor a half-crown instead of the usual penny, and that the man had kept it. I saw him through a similar tantrum when he drew from its envelope a bill from his publishers for author's corrections. His writer's conscience, which never permitted him to hesitate for a moment to make costly changes on final page proofs, must have been a sore trial to a man so close-fisted.

Moore exasperated me; he enchanted me; he parched me with boredom; he helped me beyond measure with my writing; he made me laugh to the point of tears; he embarrassed me horribly. And it was surprising in how short a space of time he could do all these things. I remember one day when I lunched with him after an invaluable morning session over a translation I was doing. We were going to a matinée of *The Master*

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Builder at the Court Theatre. During lunch, of which he did not partake, he insisted on reading aloud in a scornful monotone some rather fine passages from Hardy, and then asked me to join him in picking them to pieces. In Ebury Street, later, we passed two particularly beautiful nuns; Moore turned to me and said: "Did you ever see two such hideously evil faces?" Further on (meat was in those days rationed almost out of existence) I noticed with apprehension that a woman was approaching with a Great Dane and I knew that some observation would be made by my friend. Being far more embarrassed than curious, I did not slacken my pace when he did, and as I hurried on ahead I heard the beginning of his reprimand: "Madam, do you realize that we are at war with Germany?" Once inside the theatre, he became the ideal companion; my annoyance evaporated in the feeling that he was enjoying the play as much as I. The company was a poor one, but Moore seemed not to mind, for, as he announced to at least half the audience: "One of the splendid things about Ibsen is that his plays are actor-proof." And later: "He rides very close to the abyss of nonsense without ever falling into it."

The statement has often been made that Moore was possessed of a single-track mind, hopelessly undeveloped in all departments of knowledge save those pertaining to his profession. Of course he had a single-track mind and may God be praised for giving him one; without exactly the sort of mind he had, his laboriously fashioned books, of which at least six are masterpieces, would not be on my shelves today. Hopelessly undeveloped except in the art of writing, certainly, save for those uncanny flashes of inexplicable intelligence which seemed from time to time flatly to contradict such a limitation. A journalist friend of mine once told me of a gathering in his club which included three of the ablest military tacticians in England and into which he had introduced Moore. A particularly abstruse problem in tactics was in process of discussion with no solution in view. Moore presently held up his hand and begged leave to ask a few questions, whose aptness greatly surprised the experts. But they were speechless with amazement when, after a few moments of concentrated thought, the old white-haired "literary gent" with his disproportionate mental equipment offered them simply and clearly the solution for which they were searching.

I was, during several of those London years, "reader" at Heinemann's and I must, before bringing this rambling record to a close, tell of an incident which occurred in the room adjoining my office. Moore had been carefully enthroned at one end of a long table for the purpose of signing pages of the *de luxe* edition of one of his books, and, being annoyed to find that he was not importantly alone, he addressed the man sitting at the other end of the table in a voice that clearly indicated his feelings: "I am very busy signing these pages of my book. Would you mind going away? I cannot be disturbed." Apparently the man showed no sign of complying, for Moore disclosed his identity in order to settle the matter forthwith: "I am George Moore. Would you mind going away?" And he enforced the statement with the peremptory swish of a fat arm. Whereupon the man opposite him raised his handsome head, smiled, and said: "I am John Galsworthy and I am signing pages for a book too." I do not need to add that it was the author of *The Forsyte Saga* and not Mr. George Moore who took himself off in search of a quieter place.

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THE LIVES THAT AUTHORS LEAD

by James Norman Hall

In a recent number of The Bookman, Mr. J. B. Priestley has a paper, *Are Authors Human Beings?* in which he makes some damaging assertions with respect to professional authors in general. To be sure, he does this in the half-bantering fashion of those who wish to confess without being believed; nevertheless, one feels that he would scarcely have thought it worth while to write this paper unless he really means what he says, and that his method is merely a protective mechanism permitting him to uncover some home truths about the craft which must have been clamouring within him for expression for a considerable time.

His most damaging assertions are that most authors—he is speaking of novelists—are hopeless bunglers at living, and, in their art, either fraudulent or incompetent or both; that, instead of having more commonsense than people who are not authors, they have less and are too conceited to admit their ignorance or lack of ability; and that the only reason why they deceive the reader is because, when they write, they are so artfully plausible.

I believe that most laymen will be inclined to agree with him. We have long suspected that there is something amiss with the profession. I doubt whether, in recent years, many of us have jumped to the conclusion that novelists have a great deal of sense, not so much because of confessions of this sort as because of the revelations they unconsciously make in their books. I believe that most readers of our day will have observed, not once but many times, that life as portrayed by many of our novelists bears only a faint resemblance to life as we know it, and that the people we meet in fiction have little in common with those whom we meet in the flesh.

When first this happens, the reader may think: "This man is wiser and more observant than I, and more penetrating in his judgements of human character". He resolves to be more alert in the future, and, knowing that human nature is much the same the world over, he also knows that he cannot fail to discover, in his own walks of life, the people of whom he reads, if, in truth, they exist. Failing to find them, and continuing to meet with them in fiction, the truth at last dawns upon him: that these professed artists who set themselves up as his mentors and preceptors, are, as Mr. Priestley says, impostors.

This revelation shocks him, as well it might, for he still thinks of literary artists as being in the nature of dedicated priests, above the level of ordinary human beings, and in that exalted position because equipped for it by nature and the accident of birth. The career of authorship has been and should always be, of course, an open one, but it is only in our times that gifted charlatans or mountebanks have been taken seriously. In the past, however glibly or plausibly they might spread words over paper, they were soon discovered. Not only was a profound

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first-hand knowledge of some corner of life essential—to be acquired through a long apprenticeship—but no aspirant got beyond his apprenticeship who did not have, as well, the spiritual, intellectual, and intuitional gifts to make that knowledge significant.

Consider the work of any writer of repute during the past one hundred and fifty years and I think you will admit this to be true. Whatever his faults, lack of the knowledge of life was not one of them; furthermore, sincerity in art was the breath of life to him. Consider them singly, from the least to the highest of the great names, and you will find that all of them, at whatever point they approached the jungle of human life, cleared a path from that point inward. They were guides and interpreters in the high sense. They never falsified their vision of the jungle, nor lost themselves and you the moment they entered it.

Of how many writers of our own day, in England or America, may this be said? I don't profess to have read them all—no one man could read them all—but of those whose names are familiar on both sides of the Atlantic and who have completed the body of work necessary for judgement, I believe that not more than ten, or, perhaps, twelve, escape Mr. Priestley's accusation of fraudulence or incompetence.

Why is it that so few of their novels even approach presenting a recognizable picture of life? One reason is, of course, that life in our day presents few recognizable patterns to the shallow observer. He sees men and institutions in what appears to be a state of chaos, and lacking both wisdom and the profound knowledge of life, he assumes that this is a natural state of affairs. But, more than this, most of our modern novelists have completely lost touch with reality. They live, wrapped in cotton wool, in a cloistered sickly air where they try to make life wait on art rather than art on life. They live in cliques and clubs, see altogether too much of one another and far too little of life beyond their own narrow circles. For all the fact that they cover innumerable sheets of paper with words, they are, in reality, vastly indolent. Life at second or third hand is good enough for them, and these blackened pages give them the comfortable illusion that they have successfully performed the arduous tasks of authorship. Furthermore, they try to be artists at writing first, and, if at all, artists at living afterward. How does one know this? By their books. They may be, as Mr. Priestley says, most artfully plausible, but they are neither artful enough, nor plausible enough to deceive their readers.

I believe that it might be proven that of twenty-five novels that have stood the test of time, twenty-four have been written by men or women who have achieved art in their own lives, and that the exception, although he or she may not have achieved it, has observed with profound interest and respect this art as it appears in the lives of others. Poets often make sad botches of their lives without damaging the quality of their art, but this cannot be said of the novelist. He is an interpreter and critic of life, and unless he has brought order and beauty into his own and knows what order and beauty mean, he can have little worth saying to the rest of us.

Consider for a moment a few novelists of our own times. One has no way of deciding, except by means of his work and his published letters, whether or no Joseph Conrad was an artist at life, but these offer a criterion which fully justifies one in assuming that he was such an artist long before he ever set pen to paper as a novelist. It is clear that he discovered for himself certain

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truths to hold fast by—in one sense, streaming banners, in another, bed-rock for him to base his life upon. Try to imagine his art without this truth upon which it rests. It is impossible; it is inconceivable that his novels could have been written without it. Scarcely a story of his but shows where he stands, what a clear perception he had for judging the success or failure at living of his own created characters.

The same is true of Thomas Hardy, of Mr. Galsworthy, and, in our own country, of Willa Cather and Joseph Hergesheimer and Mrs. Wharton. It is impossible—for me, at least—to imagine them making a botch of their personal lives, or, in their work, pretending to a knowledge they do not have. Compare with these five men and women various writers of spurious eminence whose names will occur to anyone. Why do their novels make such dreary reading? Why do they leave you with so keen a sense of futility, of wasted effort? The cause has nothing to do with their subject-matter; it lies in the authors themselves. It is plain that they have no standards for judging life at whatever level. Some of these men pose, unconsciously perhaps, as wistful, fumbling seekers after truth. One may sympathize with them because of their wistfulness, but an artist must have a suspicion, at least, of what truth, for him, may be. If not, what business has he to write? What business has he to ask us to follow him into his own particular jungle if, the moment he has entered it, he merely stands there with a dazed, hopeless, defeated expression? Art deserving the name co-ordinates, makes clear. It doesn't make confusion worse confounded; add fictitious labyrinths to real ones.

This is precisely what so much of our democratic art does, if art it may be called. In our desire to overlook no possible geniuses, all too generous welcome is given to innumerable pretenders, who, in an age less chaotic than our own, would not find entrance to the ranks of literary craftsmen, to say nothing of being taken with high seriousness. They have nothing to say because they do not themselves know what it is they want to say. Finding only confusion in their own lives, they assume that the same is true in the lives of all others. We have such novelists by scores in these days, even by hundreds, and the result is that the ordinary reader turns with relief from their books back to life itself, for the refreshment it invariably gives; because life, even in the raw, is much less chaotic than these so-called interpreters make it appear in their art.

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GHOST WRITING

by Rollin Lynde Hartt

SUCCESSIVELY I have been:

an aged whaleman,
a famous tenor,
a girl escaped from Germany in wartime,
a bishop,
two missionaries,
a popular novelist,
a dean of women,
a judge,
three lawyers,
a college president,
a pugilist.

From this it will be seen how pleasantly varied is the life of crime we ghost-writers lead; yet no one aspires to it. The Tempter comes. In my own case, back in the dwindling nineties, he came in the guise of a delightful clergyman, whose family cherished, among other heirlooms, an octogenarian uncle distinguished for whaling. Would I not like to "English" the fine old fellow's log-book?

With joy I consented—only to discover that, as "copy", a log-book is quite the nearest thing in the world to nothing at all. Yet what hair-lifting yarns the fine old fellow could spin! As friend and much more than collaborator, I put them into shape for him, salting them nicely with "ahoys", "avasts", "belays", "garboard strakes" and "lobscouses", culled from Clark Russell's *Dictionary of Sea Terms*, and out they came. The title-page bore my signature beneath that of the superannuated blubber-hunter. But—

Beware of delightful clergymen with whalish uncles! When you are not looking, they launch a second edition, and what then becomes of your signature? Mine vanished completely, the whalish uncle's remained, and there was I—a ghost-writer!

Vividly I recall the shock. Had I been shanghaied into piracy or rum-running, it could scarcely have been greater; for I remembered a concern that used to furnish literary wares for the purchasers to claim as their own (short stories, $25; college essays, $10; sermons, $5), and I remembered my intense indignation when approached by that concern.

Resolving thenceforth to avoid delightful clergymen with whalish uncles, I connected myself with the Boston *Transcript*, and in its stronghold of Puritan integrity felt safe. Oh, vain illusion! Satan beguiled me even there—this time in the form of a New York editor who asked me to step out and interview Caruso.

Harmless enough the request sounded. I went, and you should have seen the flutter in the lobby of the Hotel Bellevue as the world-renowned tenor came down to talk to me. How big he looked then! A glorious chap, magnificent—and so modest! All he would talk about was the day of small things, his start.

Through an interpreter he said: "At twenty, I was a mechanical draughtsman in Naples, and used to sing at my work, with the window open. Not far away, there was a

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church, whose organist served also as tenor soloist. One day when he had a cold and needed a substitute, some neighbour suggested me. The organist taught me a canticle, and that was the beginning of my public career. Twelve canticles a day I sang. Remuneration, twenty cents."

When I tried to make him tell of singing before monarchs, "*Niente*—nothing!" he said, and, turning on his illustrious heel, walked away.

Innocently I wrote this out. To my astonishment, it was published, not as an interview, but as a part of *My Life* by Enrico Caruso; so there I was again—a ghost-writer!

Now, the world is so constituted that when through no will of your own you have twice fallen from grace, it begins to look like fate; but I did not even then abandon myself utterly, though I was slipping, slipping, and, little as I realized it at the time, I was being speeded on my downward way by influences brought to bear on me in the *Transcript* office itself. Authors called—and their appearance now and then surprised me greatly. You remember Sandow, the autobiographical strong man. How slim she was! And the author of *Up from Slavery*—how blond! And the lady who wrote etiquette books—how at home in a bar-room with his foot on the brass rail!

I know that among malefactors it is a common pose to lay the responsibility for delinquency and crime upon shoulders other than one's own, but I sincerely believe that this too frequent contact with ghost-writers was what later brought me to the stage where I become of interest to detectives. I reached that stage during the War, while connected with the Chicago *Tribune*.

A Chicago girl, whom Miss Mary Garden had sent abroad, had spent five months in war-time Germany, observed the premonitory symptoms of revolution there, and returned. She had a story to tell, but could not write. Without one littlest twinge of conscience, I let the *Tribune* detail me to ghost-write the girl.

You will say that my depravity was now a finished product. Not quite. It needed detectives to perfect and polish it. They were quick to arrive; imagining that the young lady's account of a Germany already close to collapse could have no other purpose than to deter us from vigorous effort in the War, the Secret Service honoured us with its attentions. Detectives shadowed the girl, opened her mail, listened in on her telephone, and, scenting code in a chance remark of hers, dispatched a man all the way to Denver to see about it! In their zeal, they shadowed me!

Very hardening this was—so much so, in fact, that, lost to all sense of shame, I went brazenly out on my own and ghost-wrote a bishop.

John Siddall printed my bishop, and John Siddall hardened my conscience still more by saying: "Of course, if these things we publish over delusive signatures were works of art, ghost-writing would be villainous. As it is, it's as harmless as letting a man sign a check his secretary has typed for him."

By that time, I had removed to New York and joined the staff of the *Literary Digest*, where, under such good Christian influences, I might perhaps have reformed. But again came the Tempter, this time in the guise of a missionary home from India with the loveliest yarns about cobras, about tigers, about crocodiles, and about wild boys in the jungle. Resist? Impossible! I ghost-wrote that missionary into a magazine series, then into a book, and I gloried in my sin.

For, depraved though I was, I knew it to be a sin. True, these things we write for

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other people to sign are not works of art. But they are, nevertheless, works of craftsmanship, and they give those other people credit for skills and aptitudes they do not possess—or, at all events, credit for labour unperformed. That is why, if you hunt far enough and long enough, you can find people who refuse to be ghost-written, though there is ghost-writing and ghost-writing, with room for distinctions. When you do the talking and I do the writing, what harm? But when I bring you something all my own and you sign it, oh, scandalous!

Once, after enormous library research, I produced an article which, to be impressive, required the signature of an eminent Episcopalian. I approached several eminent Episcopalians, each of whom said: "Impossible for me to sign. I cannot lay claim to such erudition, and the style is not mine, and if I signed, I should get caught." In my extremity, I said to a colleague, "We must find a big, outstanding, silly Episcopalian, with no conscience", to which he replied, "You mean a bishop", and will doubtless burn.

The affair ended by my signing my own name, but not so the next affair. In the interest of a college, I had done an article based on research no less extensive, and seven editors spurned it. Accordingly, I tore it in two. The college president signed one half, a celebrated novelist the other. Both were printed, and doubtless I shall burn.

Do not be surprised at my acknowledging guilt. The most hardened offenders retain at least some rags and tatters of ethical perception, and very few ghost-writers fail to recognize the depravity of humbugs frequent in other professions. We have, for example, a deep scorn of ghost-painters. To illustrate:—

Back in the nineties, you thought yourself fortunate if invited to the studio teas given in Boston by a certain fascinating Englishman, and doubly fortunate if able to acquire one of his paintings. Quite a lion he became, and quite a lion he might have remained, had there not arrived from London a deserted wife—with a story: "Me 'usband 'ere—'e's just a barber. 'E falls in with a pynter as carnt sell, 'oo says to me 'usband, 'You tyke a false nyme, and I'll pynt it in the corners, an' you tyke me pyntin's to Boston an' sell'."

Wicked ghost-writer though I am, I consider this prank a very questionable one, and prefer the standards maintained by the friends of George Inness. Looking in on a young painter and finding him at work, Inness would make suggestions: "Now, if I were you—just let me have your brush and palette a moment?—I'd take out this cloud—you don't mind, do you?—and here I'd put in more trees, so"—and keep on until behold, it was an Inness! But did the young painter claim it as his own? Oh, no! Daubing "Inness" in the lower right-hand corner, he sold it for a small fortune.

These references to a craft other than his own come naturally to a ghost-writer, for he likes to feel that the guild of malefactors in which he enjoys membership is rather a big guild, and so it is, including not only authors and painters, but Tin Pan Alley composers and highly talented architectural designers. When a happy inspiration in jazz occurs to you, take it to Tin Pan Alley, dispose of it for ten dollars, and within a week it will be a song hit glorified with the signature of a popular musical genius. Some of the architectural headliners which have gone up in New York City and elsewhere suggest an analogous origin, but let that pass. Consider the more relevant question: What is an architect?

We used to say, "A fellow who buys a picture-postcard for two sous in Europe and sells it in America for fifty thousand dollars".

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Such was partly the truth, but only partly, for it overlooked the draughtsman. The picture-postcard had to be Americanized, and it was the draughtsman who Americanized it, with property trees and property automobiles thrown in, after which the architect signed the water-colour and perhaps even the building.

Coming now to our own experiment in crime, we ghost-writers take pride in reflecting that we sin in distinguished company. Who writes the King's Speech? Never the King. Who wrote Washington's Farewell Address? Washington? No, Hamilton. Who wrote the American notes to Germany? Wilson, though they were all signed "Bryan". In affairs of state, then, ghost-writing is eminently respectable. Indeed, it has been thought respectable in realms far more exalted. Who wrote the Bible? Moses, Solomon, David, Isaiah, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and the rest? No, God did, or so we were taught, and in an old wood-cut God is seen ghost-writing the Four Evangelists; upon the ear of each Evangelist falls a beam of celestial light.

Did somebody ghost-write Shakespeare? The Baconians think so, and name the ghost-writer, but why only a single ghost-writer? Read the plays in rapid succession, and see how they impress you. One is hard reading, another easy. One contains grammatical errors, another is wholly without them. One abounds in epigrammatic lines, another has not a phrase that we ever quote. One has pet unprintables recurring throughout; so has another, but not the same pet unprintables. One is strewn with obsolete words, another strikingly free from them. Did a single Shakespeare write them all?

Assume a number of Shakespeares, and you explain, at least plausibly, why the Swan of Avon was so little worshipped in his day. For, if he employed ghost-writers—and you almost begin to believe he did—then some of them must have told, thereby considerably defeathering the Swan.

Do you happen to recall the Eighty-first Sonnet? Assume that one of Shakespeare's ghost-writers was the real author and that he is addressing Shakespeare. Then read it through carefully with that in mind:—

Or I shall live your epitaphs to make,
Or you survive when I in earth am rotten;
From hence your memory death cannot take,
Although in me each part will be forgotten.
Your name from hence immortal life shall have,
Though I, once gone, to all the world must die:
The earth can yield me but a common grave,
When you entombed in men's eyes shall lie.
Your monument shall be my gentle verse,
Which eyes not yet created shall o'er-read;
And tongues to be your being shall rehearse,
When all the breathers of this world are dead;
You still shall live,—such virtue hath my pen,—
Where breath most breathes,—even in the mouths of men.

Read it again—and again and again. Try it on your friends. See if either you or they find anywhere a line or word to prove that the assumption with which you started out was false. False it may be, yet the whole impression strongly suggests a ghost-writer speaking in his own person and addressing his employer.

The brotherhood of ghost-writers in general looks upon Shakespeare's performance, if his it was, with well-thought-out disapproval, for we know that it is not rightly our function to bestow upon others high merit which they do not deserve. We blushed for the large and growing class of Americans who confessed to having written *A Message to Garcia*; we still blush for the brilliant ghost-writer who elevated an ordinary business man to a place among philosophers; and, could we create

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it, we should hesitate to let a masterpiece bear a signature at once illustrious and false.

In the main, we live up to our principles, such as they are. If sometimes our clients gain credit for rather more skill in mere workmanship than their abilities warrant, and if they say of the ghost-writer, "It is he who hath made us, and not we ourselves", think how many might say the same of the editor, for, not infrequently, editing amounts almost to ghost-writing.

Leading up to an account of an earthquake that shattered his hotel, a charming foreigner relates, "We men were in the café". But that is what the editor wrote. What the charming foreigner wrote is well known: "We man was remaining in the coffee." Miles of pidgin English are thus unpidgined in every sanctum, and more than that is often done. Seventeen editors rejected *David Harum*. The eighteenth pulled *David* to pieces, threw some away, rearranged the rest, polished them up, and there you were.

Nevertheless there seems to be developing among editors a certain vague disapproval of ghost-writing. A particularly conscientious magazine now favours twin signatures—"By King Carol as told to Burt McConnell"—and something of a shudder runs through the literary underworld which I frequent. Ghost-writers begin to question if this is not perhaps the start of a movement dooming them to sore embarrassment if not actually to extinction. But Carol, as we know, has a most unusual sense of honour, and not all ghost-written kings would let on. No, nor all ghost-written whalemen, nor all ghost-written tenors, nor—but why should I incriminate more of my clients?

To stop ghost-writing, check its patrons. Convince an aged whaleman that, just because he cannot write, his yarns should perish. Convince a world-renowned tenor that for the same reason his story deserves no audience. Do as much for all the mutely inglorious. Convincing them should not be difficult. Anybody can be convinced of anything; have we not had Technocracy? Meanwhile, a lot of these ghost-written people can write and some of them have a gift of self-expression which it is a shame for us ghost-writers to discourage.

My missionary home from India—what a genius for verisimilitude in this introduction of his own to a fight with a tiger: "As we were approaching the spot, I was asleep in my ox-cart, reading a novel!" My pugilist—though still wearing a cauliflower ear, he now conducts a gymnasium, and scolds delightfully about the college athletes who settle down at desks, taking no exercise. "Their muscles throw purzons in their system," he says, "an' we have to burl them out." If eventually ghost-writing costs me my hope of heaven, I do not think it will be principally because I have enriched the literature of my country with too extensive an array of humbugs. I think it will be principally because so often I have deprived my clients' readers of a huge and splendid laugh.

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"MR. WALTER WHITMAN"

by Sculley Bradley

"That's where Mr. Walter Whitman used to keep his pet crickets," said Mr. Rowan. The wiry patriarch heaved a stick of cord-wood from the wagon and pointed at a venerable maple at the corner of the old house. Mr. Reilly stared up at the old man in astonishment.

"Do you mean Walt Whitman, the poet?" he asked.

"Seems to me I did hear he was a poet," said Mr. Rowan. "Anyway, he was a writer, and he used to come down and stay in this house with the Staffords, summers, years ago, when I was a young man workin' as a hand on the place."

It was in this manner that the present owner of the old Stafford house, at Laurel Springs, New Jersey, first learned that he had purchased the house in which Walt Whitman spent his summers from 1876 until 1882, while he was recovering partially from the paralytic attack which had caused fears for his life. Camden, New Jersey, had found a place on the literary map of the United States in 1875 when Walt Whitman was sent there, a hopeless invalid, to the home of his brother. Passers-by on Stevens Street began to ask each other about the impressive figure of a man who sat by the window in George Whitman's house, with the beard and hair of a Hebrew prophet and the countenance of a benign and stricken god. His friends had given him up, but the old poet of life was destined still to live a score of years and write much of his best poetry and all of his best prose. Almost helpless, he was taken by his brother in the spring of 1876 to a farm on Timber Creek, where the town of Laurel Springs now stands, about twelve miles below Camden. There, during several successive summers, he was nursed back to life by the kindly Staffords and regained partial use of his limbs. He wrestled with trees; he took mud baths and sun baths in a day when New Jersey was inhabited by a simple race who could only regard such exposure as a scandalous and foolhardy eccentricity; he subjected his spirit to the healing of nature and became blood-brother to the birds and bees and flowers for which he had yearned ever since he had left his native countryside in early youth.

There is no need for anyone to describe Walt Whitman's life at the farm on Timber Creek. The best of it he recorded in those nature sketches in his *Specimen Days* which for veracity and sensitiveness vie with the writings of his friend John Burroughs, who admired them so highly. But as a lover of these sketches and an admirer of *Leaves of Grass* I had long desired to see this spot, although I feared it might turn out to be as disappointing as Walden Pond. No biographer of Whitman has located it precisely. Several have said it was "on Timber Creek" and let it go at that. But Timber Creek is a sprawling stream with meandering tributaries which dawdles through southeastern New Jersey and comes at last into the Delaware River below Gloucester by what seems

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a sheer inadvertence. Another author casually places it "near Camden". Thus inspired, I set off to find the place, and succeeded. I also found Mr. John A. Rowan, who knew "Mr. Walter Whitman" and told me some things about him that I had not learned in books.

To reach Laurel Springs and the Stafford House, starting from Philadelphia, you cross the bridge to Camden and follow the signs and the ten thousand automobiles that indicate the route to Atlantic City. After about two miles you pass the entrance to Harleigh Cemetery, where the poet lies buried in his massive rock. If your inclination runs as little to tombs as this writer's, you will press on to the White Horse Pike. Twelve miles from the Camden toll-house you reach an unimpressive side road marked "Broadway" for no good reason that you can perceive. It is especially distinguished at present by a faded blue sign with gilt letters announcing to an unfeeling world that Post Number Fifty-six of the American Legion invites you to turn here and visit Laurel Springs. You turn right here to the end of the road at its junction with Linden Avenue, where you "jog left" about one hundred yards to the next street, Maple Avenue. As you turn right into this street you will see the Stafford house, the second house on your left. It would arrest your attention even if you were not seeking it. It is obviously the oldest structure in the neighbourhood, and is the kind of house that rests the eyes. Its builder had the unerring instinct for proportions that marked the homely architects of his period. It is a white frame house, slightly weatherbeaten, shaded by three enormous and luxuriant maples in the front yard. Across the front of the lawn is a hedge of lilac bushes, placed there in Whitman's time, because, as John Rowan tells me, "Mr. Walter Whitman was fond of lilacs". Its date has not been ascertained, for the early records of the township were destroyed by fire, but it was an old house at the time of the first recorded conveyance in 1812.

The present owner is charmingly patient with the intrusions of scribblers and enthusiasts. He not only has shown me all over the old house and its grounds, with its maples and lilacs, but he helped me to determine the location of the "old farm-lane" of *Specimen Days*, which now is a mere path leading from the Stafford enclosure at the edge of the town down over what were originally Stafford fields to the creek and the lake. Time has not eradicated the landmarks loved of the poet, although the half-century has wrought many changes. It is a satisfaction and a pleasure to be able to locate the very trees, the lake, the spring and marl-pit mentioned in *Specimen Days*. But this is another story. For of course I went on at my first opportunity to see Mr. Rowan. I found him in the next town, a few miles away, and I was amply repaid, for I not only gained the friendship of a most lovable person, but also I derived a picture of Walt Whitman from one who had known him simply as a man and not at all as a poet.

At the age of eighty-two John Rowan still carries on, at Clementon, New Jersey, the wood and charcoal business which he has pursued successfully for a half-century at that place. His charcoal mill he built with his own hands, and the original paddle-wheel still operates the special machinery which he invented and made for the manufacture of a product so fine that he has been able for forty years to supply most of the charcoal used in refining by the United States Mint at Philadelphia. He will show you with justifiable pride an article in a recent issue of a scientific magazine dealing with him, his mill, and his fine charcoal. He is one of the

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last few survivors of a sturdy race of vanished Americans. His face is like a late autumn apple, his nature as wholesome; and his gigantic, wiry frame is unbowed by his burden of years and toil. He "never met another man like Mr. Walter Whitman", he says, and he will talk of this idol of his youth as long as you will listen. His speech is marked by a racy dignity, and I shall try to reproduce as accurately as I can a conversation which I held with him recently. After a long chat on a variety of topics, I got to the heart of my quest. "Mr. Rowan," I said, "Mr. Reilly tells me that he first learned that he had purchased the Walt Whitman house when you told him the story of Whitman's pet crickets in the old maple tree."

JOHN ROWAN: Well now I reckon I was the one that told him that Mr. Walter Whitman used to come there, o' summers, when I was a young man workin' as hand on the place, but I don't seem to recollect the crickets.

B.: Perhaps it was someone else who told him. He thinks it happened while you were delivering a load of wood, when you suddenly pointed to the maple tree and said that was where Whitman used to keep his pet crickets.

J. R.: I don't seem to recall the crickets. But that was an old maple tree even then, and Mr. Walter Whitman used to sit there in his easy chair fer hours, studyin' to himself, and writin', and mebbe just lookin' around.

B.: Did he used to talk to you a good bit?

J. R.: Well, at fust I sort of kep' clear; I was busy on the place, and his eyes had a sort of far-off look. Then, one day as I passed, he reached his hand out an' touched my arm, an' smiled at me. You never forgot Mr. Walter Whitman's smile, an' I came to look for it after that. "Son," says he, "what is your name?"

"John Rowan," says I.

"And are you kin," says he, "to Buster Rowan?"

"Well," I says, "he is my older brother, only his name is not Buster, but James K. Rowan. Buster is the name they gave him when he was a boy, because he *was* a buster!"

"Well," says he, "I kin see you're one as thinks into things, and I allus want to talk to you." Then he says, "Do you know Uncle Jimmy and Aunt Sally Morgan, over to Watsontown?" I told him I did. Uncle Jimmy had been a fine smart farmer, but he'd took to drink and was gettin' quite shaky, an' Aunt Sally was havin' her own troubles to keep them in food and clothes.

"Well," says Mr. Whitman, reachin' in his pocket slow-like, and holdin' up a silver dollar, "will you please give Uncle Jimmy this with my best respects, and tell him I hope he's a doin' better?"

"Indeed I will," says I. And then he took another silver dollar out of his pocket, an', says he, "Will you please give this to Aunt Sally, too, an' tell her I send her my love?" And when I took it to them, and told them it was from Mr. Walter Whitman, I can remember yet how proud they were.

B.: Had he known them long?

J. R.: No, jest met 'em around som'ers and knowed they needed help. I remember how glad he was when Uncle Jimmy gin himself to the Lord, an' quit drinkin'. He was always doin' somethin' like that, an' most of the folks all loved him, spite of the stories as used to go around sometimes.

B.: What stories, Mr. Rowan?

J. R.: Well, it really wasn't anything much. You know they did say he had lost his place with the guv'ment, down in Washington, because some book he'd wrote wasn't proper, but no one that knowed him could see how he could write anything very bad. But you

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know he was a very sick man, and the Doctor had told him to get in the sun's much as possible, and to take mud-baths. There was a spring an' a fine marl-pit down by the creek on the Stafford place, and Mr. Walter Whitman would take off his clothes and lie in the sun there, then smear himself with mud, and wash in the spring water. Some folks must 'a seen him—anyway the older heads began to talk. It warn't nothin' though.

B.: That spring is nearly dried up—although there is still plenty of mud.

J. R.: Is it now? That was a fine sweet spring, with a sight of water and a three-foot fall, an' many's the fine drink of water I've had there. The blackberries was thick and good there, too.

B.: Yes, Whitman mentioned the blackberries and the spring in the book he wrote about the place.

J. R.: Now *did* he write a book about it!

B.: Yes, *Specimen Days*; didn't you ever read it?

J. R.: No, I never heard tell of it.

B.: Well, he speaks of the old Stafford lane to the creek, and the flowers, and the birds, and the creek and the pond.

J. R.: Well, it's all true, I expect. He was the most learnt man I ever *did* see about birds and flowers and critters, and farmin' and such. I used to love talkin' to him about 'em.

B.: Do you think he learned all that after he came down here to visit?

J. R.: No, he must have known all about 'em all his life, from the way he talked. I knowed right smart myself, and I could see he'd been brought up on a farm som'ers. Mr. Walter Whitman was a *learnt* man, too—out of books, I mean. He used to talk to me about everything, and I aint never seen his ekal since. I often sit and think, "I wish now, I could meet another man like Mr. Walter Whitman to talk to".

B.: Did he tell you much about the stars? I think he knew a great deal about them.

J. R.: Well, I remember he used to talk about plantin' things by the stars, and the like of that.

B.: Did he never talk to you about the meaning of the signs in the heavens—telling the future by the stars, and so on?

J. R.: No, I don't recollect that. But we did talk about perdictin' the future, though. You don't hear tell much of phrenology in these days, but everybody knew about it then. A man as knew about sech things had written out for me about myself. He was mostly right, too. I remember he told me I was the kind of a man that would never get rich, but that I would never be in want. I told that to Mr. Whitman, and I recollect he laughed and said that was the best way to be. He had been to a phrenologist himself, years before, an' he said that what he had been told all come to pass.

B.: Whitman apparently seemed a very good man to you. Did he talk to you about religion?

J. R.: Mr. Walter Whitman *was* a good man, an' no mistake. You could jest *see* it to look at him. But he warn't a hand to be talkin' religion. Kind of shy about it. Of course, if you started the subject, he'd join in a bit. But I allus thought he was more interested in livin' good than talkin' about it.

B.: That old Stafford place is a fine house. Does it look about the same as it did in '76?

J. R.: Well, of course, there's a new wing out back, but it seems to look jest about the same. Same three old maples across the front, too.

B.: How about that fine hedge of lilacs. When were they planted?

J. R.: That was soon after Mr. Walter Whitman started coming down. Seems like I can recall he was 'specially fond of lilacs. Maybe he even planted some on 'em.

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B.: He *was*, you know. He wrote a poem about Lincoln's death, called *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed*. Maybe you've read it?

J. R.: No, I never read a thing he wrote. But I used to talk to him about Lincoln. He used to say that Lincoln was the greatest American ever lived. I think so too, fer that matter. I sort of remember that Mr. Whitman knew Lincoln, or something, down in Washington, during the War.

B.: I don't believe he knew him personally, but he admired him, and had many opportunities to see him.

J. R.: Must 'a studied him right close, all he knew about him!

B.: Was Whitman as friendly to all the children as he was to you, Mr. Rowan?

J. R.: Well, I wasn't a child. I must 'a been about twenty-five or -six when he began to come down here. But he *was* fond of children, I can tell you. The young Staffords seemed to worship him, the two girls, an' Ed an' Harry. I can still remember how angry Mr. Whitman was when I told him about the floggin' Harry got in school!

B.: How was that, Mr. Rowan?

J. R.: Well, you see, we had a district school, and the schoolmaster this perticular year was a Mr. ——, a powerful man with a very high temper. Well, one day Harry done something, I fergit what, but anyway the teacher wanted to flog him fer it. He told him to take off his coat, but Harry wouldn't. At last the teacher started to take it off *fer* 'im, but every time he took off one sleeve, Harry'd stick his arm back in the other. That made the teacher so mad he threw the boy on the floor, and put his knee on his back, and tuk off his coat. Then he hauled him up and flogged him onmerciful. The Staffords weren't very well off, you know, and Harry hadn't much on underneath that coat. When he started home he couldn't straighten up. My brother told me he saw him in the swimmin' hole next summer, and his back was still scarred.

B.: That is interesting. Did you know that in his youth Whitman wrote a story about a similar instance in which a boy was flogged to death?

J. R.: No! Well anyway he was very angry when he heard of this, and thought some of us bigger ones should 'a interfered. But none of us would 'a been a handful to that teacher. But Mr. Walter Whitman was allus interested in all the young people, and knowed when they got married, and such.

B.: Did he ever say anything about his own love affairs?

J. R.: No, but I can remember he was interested in my courting, and used to cheer me up sometimes.

B.: In what way, Mr. Rowan?

J. R.: Well, you see, I'd been callin' on Emmy steady for well nigh onto two years, an' they was snortin' cold winters, I tell you. Still, somehow, I could never git up me courage to say anything *direct* to her, and Mr. Walter Whitman he used to tease me about it sometimes, and tell me to keep tryin'. At last one night somethin' got into me, and I says to her, sudden-like, says I, "Emma, either we git married, or I quit".

"Well," says she, "why didn't you say so sooner?" I remember how Mr. Whitman laughed when I told him about it. He wasn't one to laugh much either; mostly a summat serious man.

B.: Didn't he have many visitors?

J. R.: Oh, they was allus a sight of folk comin' down to see him—fine lookin' and well dressed folks from Philadelphia, New York and Boston. Some of 'em was even furriners, I guessed from seein' 'em, but I never knew who any of 'em were, or learned their names.

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Although Mr. Rowan seemed willing to continue the conversation indefinitely, I felt sure that it must be past his bed-time and reluctantly parted from the stalwart and gentle patriarch. He is only one of several kind friends who have given me their memories of Whitman; especially Mr. Wesley Stafford, a nephew of the elder Staffords, who proudly shows you an autographed copy of *Memoranda during the War*, a rare bound copy, presented to his wife by the poet; and Mrs. Browning, the younger of the two Stafford daughters, who still treasures a collection of girlish articles brought to her by Whitman on his successive visits. Others substantially agree with Mr. Rowan in the testimony which he, more fully than any other, has given concerning the impression made by the great poet upon a simple people when he lived and moved among them. They did not know his poems, but the "amplitude of time" in which he trusted has brought him readers enough and fame enough as a literarary man. Perhaps a greater tribute than all of this is to have survived for a half-century so vividly and so sweetly in the memories of plain people who knew him only as a man and scarcely realized that he was a poet at all.

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"THE BREAST OF THE NYMPH"

by Branch Cabell

You have written out for me, O most enviable fool, a list of questions which you desire me to answer as a guide for your future, so that you may "become a writer". Each question has a ring so familiar that I may not guess how often, how very, very often, I have received your pathetically brisk, and forthright, and business-like letter before I received it, yet again, today.

You are, you inform me (and indeed you almost always are) one of the editors of your college magazine. You are "majoring in English", and besides your pursuit of "other English courses for necessary backgrounds", you are, you tell me, the member of "a creative writing class". You have set every commended trap, in brief, to capture the straying muse in order that you may domesticate her out-of-hand as your helpmate in letters.

"Am I", you continue, in somewhat the pouncing manner of a lawyer who discredits a witness, "on the right track? Should I imitate the style of so-called model authors in my writing? If so, whom would you suggest? Should I get a few years' experience on a newspaper? I have an idea that it is well to become steeped in classicism. I am working conscientiously to that end. Is it advisable to continue? Or should I study present-day literature more?"

And yet other question upon question do you put to me, about such irrelated matters as art and Mr. Ludwig Lewisohn and magazine-editors and the best book of synonyms, out of an engaging belief that I, who have no least interest in your welfare, will be willing to devote a day or so to answering all these questions one after the other.

Still, it is not difficult to answer your questions. The reply is that I do not know. It is my private opinion that whether you do the things about which you inquire will not matter a straw's weight in your possible evolution as an author. It is also my absolute conviction that whether or not you do eventually "become a writer" is an affair in which I have not the tiniest interest. In brief, I can see no logical reason why I should not drop your letter into the waste-paper basket, and so have done with both your infernal briskness and you.

Instead, I fall a-wondering why you should want—or at least should temporarily imagine that you want—"to become a writer". The term, to begin with, is staggeringly vague. People write all manner of oddments, such as verse, and society columns, and sermons, and advertising copy. Yet I believe your term is apt enough. I look back, across some seven lustres, to the time when I too was the editor of a college magazine, and when I too debated most of the questions you raise, and when I too meant "to become a writer". For there was never any doubt in my mind, after my sixteenth year or thereabouts, that I would "become a writer". And yet there was never any definite notion, I am sure, what form this writing was to take. There was certainly no delusion that writers were rewarded with affluence or high station.

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AUTHORSHIP was not esteemed in the Virginia of my boyhood, and in fact, for all practical purposes, authorship was unknown there. Upon but two flesh-and-blood writers had the eyes of my adolescence rested; and none, in so far as I knew, thought of these two as being, primarily, writers. One was Amélie Rives, whose first novels were then being read furtively in Richmond, with shocked zest, as really not at all the sort of thing which you might expect from an unmarried girl, and as, in brief, books which the well-bred must blandly ignore when such books were published by a Rives of Albemarle—and the other was Thomas Nelson Page, who, in Richmond, was esteemed and made much of on the ground that, apart from being "one of the real Pages", he had married considerable money in taking his second wife.

A bit later, to be sure, when I was at college, I heard that the youngest Glasgow girl had published a book, but by that time my business in life was fixed, nor did I remember clearly which one of the three was Ellen. It comes back to me that my informant, whom Appomattox had retired from lieutenant-colonelcy in the Confederate Army, described it as one of the most damnable things he had ever heard of in his life, that Frank Glasgow's daughter should be getting mixed up with that sort of thing. Since my informant too had a daughter, in whom my young eyes could detect no flaw nor any imperfection at that season, I have no doubt that I looked respectfully sympathetic.

No, when I was your age there was no tangible prompting for me to turn author. The sin of Virginia was written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond, as Jeremiah has failed to remark: it was graven upon the tombstone of her dead excellence. She had not honoured any artist. She had esteemed only the cheap and ready glories of big words spoken in her praise, and in the praise of all her customs, by the equally cheap and the far, far more ready demagogue: the word which is written Virginia had not rewarded.

The leather-lunged congressmen and the braying senators she took into her bed of love, and they defiled her with loud platitudes: she doted also upon divers retired, but not at all retiring, Confederate veterans, whose voice was as the voice of asses. To the roaring of wild pastors she hearkened amorously. All these had bruised her teats so that her breasts might nurse the young no longer. With all these never-idle talkers Virginia had played the wanton in a little corner, in the plashed mire of her stagnant backwaters, saying, Speak to me of my preeminence! And they all had spoken to the desire of Virginia, very egregiously.

Of beauty and of chivalry and of grey legions they spoke, and of a fallen civilization such as the world will not ever see again, and, for that matter, never did see; of a first permanent settlement, and of a Mother of Presidents, and of a republic's cradle, and of Stars and Bars, and of yet many other bygones, long ago at one with dead Troy and Atlantis, they babbled likewise for interminable years, without ever, ever ceasing. The wind blew away their words as each word was spoken: still did they vocalize in the wind's teeth.

There were no written words to outlive their babblings, for Virginia did not read, nor did she honour any writer. She doted only upon the big words which the aspiring candidate bellowed, or which grey little men with chin whiskers declaimed weepingly from the platform or from the pulpit. She honoured stucco idols. She honoured mush. No honest writer might thrive in Virginia.

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There was no art of any kind in Virginia. There was but an endless braying. All these things did I behold there in the days of my youth: nor are these ills yet dulcified, to express the matter just as mildly as possible.

No, when I was your age, my dear sir, there was no least tangible prompting for me to write; nor did I have any notion as to what I intended to write. There was simply the blind and very strong instinct, much such as you voice now, "to become a writer".

So near as I may judge, every person who eventually does in any serious sense "become a writer" is conscious in his youth of this large dim vocation. The *poietes*, the "maker", is called by what power he knows not, to make things out of words. It is as though a spell has been laid upon him, after the approved Hellenic fashion, through one brief and chance-given sight of unveiled beauty, revealing that which seemed not utterly human, but an ambiguous and in some degree a more sinister loveliness than men seek ordinarily. He has seen this but as a gleaming beheld only in part and only for the space of a heart-beat—a space wherein the beholder's heart did not beat at all, but faltered between terror and worship and longing. He has seen, somehow, what Swinburne, in one rare moment of lucidity, has called "the breast of the nymph in the brake". It is that matter, I think, which every true romantic tries at one time or another to commemorate in words: yet if you reply with a blank stare I can but hastily agree with your commonsense.

Nor do I mean to speak further of this matter. For this is, I admit, a matter with which the ordered life and the slowly garnered wisdom of man's race have no concern, and of which human reason may well doubt the civic and economic worth. It is a trivial matter which the aging deny with shrugged shoulders; they speak also of hormones and of Freud and of greensickness very comfortably: but the eyes of young men have seen this matter, and they stay perturbed.

So at least I believe; and if I happen to be wrong I can always reply in self-defence that it is by no means for the first time. I believe, too, that in youth the elect writer envisages in some sort, very far away, the notions which are some day to be his notions. They have not yet entered his mind. But he glimpses them as remote and lovely and dear wraiths, and he knows that by and by they will become clear and intimate. He does not, through heaven's mercy, foreknow what tyrannous taskmasters they will prove, nor what tricksters either. He is conscious only of their allure and of a magic to which his inmost being responds. In his youth the elect writer is thus doubly a nympholept, in that his seeing is bedazzled also by the resplendent beauty which is later to inform his books.

The question is but whether he have the strength of mind to conquer all these aberrations. It has been justly observed that many men are poets in their youth, but that nevertheless (although Rossetti phrases the outcome with a difference) the most of them get over it quite satisfactorily. They get over it, and they evolve, along with the average of mankind, into the respectable practitioners of one or another respected profession, with no nonsense about them. The routine of commonsense engulfs them: they put on flesh and develop bank accounts; in a thicket they look to find no more than a lost golf ball or a spot handy for bodily relief. They become, in brief, mature: and the world is thus happily stocked with book buyers, who endeavour through fine literature to recapture some seeming of their lost youth.

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With the professional creative writer who has any spark of genius the case is otherwise. He does not forget that silvery strange gleam. He retains always some immaturity, in a ratio so direct to his ultimate importance as to suggest that literary talent is but a form of arrested development. He has need of this immaturity, God knows, in his droll trade. For, as you may see a child a-gallop upon a non-existent horse, just so must the creative writer direct and restrain and spur this or the other non-existent character until all have galloped or cantered, or have limped half-foundered, it may be, to the appointed goal-post of his Explicit. He does not, in fine, with the comparative temperance of Tom o' Bedlam, call for a horse of air to get him through this world, but elects to drive a lean herd of phantoms tally-ho. That is his business in life, and it will not bear looking at rationally.

It follows that the elect writer is not, and cannot afford to be, in any mundane sense, rational. To the contrary, for the sake of his writing's health and gusto he must cherish an all-pervading illogic, which under cool inspection appears not far removed from feeble-mindedness. And he does. None who has been much thrown with accomplished and original writers can fail to note their peculiar childishness. Here is the child's vanity, and the unchecked impulsiveness, the unreason, the naïve lying, the petulance, the catch-as-catch-can morality of a child, displayed, as it were, all over the place.

Now as touches this point, of "temperament", the romantic writer at least has back of him some weight of rowdy tradition and his own old legend of wine and garrets shared tête-à-tête. To discover any professed romantic who did not hold any such irregular traffic regularly would be, in fact, as unsettling as to learn that your bootlegger was a total abstainer: it would cause you to deal elsewhere. Yet I do not find that to compose the most painstaking sort of "realism" tends to make its writer a bit more credible as a human being. I have known sundry "realists", and each one of them was a fine triumph of fantasy. You have but to think about Sherwood Anderson or Sinclair Lewis, for example, to perceive that either of these two authors, if put by conjuration into any one of his own books, would flaunt among the sombre creatures of his fancy like a flaming phoenix or a red-and-gold hippogriffin.

Creative writers of every kind, in brief, appear to me to be rather fantastically gifted children—like changelings who as yet remember a little magic picked up in their faëry nurseries,—and they do not ever, except in exteriors, become mature. They can play at being grown-up, of course, like all other children; and some of them can do it quite well for an hour or so. But at bottom each knows that he cannot afford the comfortable ossifications of real maturity. He knows that creative literature is but a variant of the child's game "let's pretend", and that to excel in it requires the retention of a childish turn of mind.

If I appear to belittle creative literature by pointing out that it (like many other high matters, such as religion, or a sense of honour, or the institution of marriage) makes but a poor showing in the cold light of intelligence, that is far from my design. I intend, rather, a compliment. Age and experience will teach the considerate to distrust every exercise of human intelligence, and to observe that life is made livable only through a wise choice in delusions. The artist in letters and the patrons of the artist in letters are all deluded after a most handsome and comfort-giving fashion, I think, and nobody ought to ask more.

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But to return, my dear sir, to your brisk demands. I can say only that the creative writer needs, to begin with, and to sustain him even to the wrought iron gates of the cemetery, a peculiar order of childish unreason which will permit his following, day in and day out, after he does not know precisely what, into regions of which he can have no foreknowledge beyond the fact that they in all probability do not exist. Such unreason is the one requisite of a successful word-monger, and the one way to acquire it is to be born with it. In other words, *poeta nascitur*. Nor is this congenital unreason to be regarded as, of necessity, a misfortune. Sometimes, to be sure, it leads the creative writer into the traditionary rags and gutters. At other times it results in a quite comfortable livelihood, as go things physical, and the man is not nominally an outcast.

I admit that the difference here is not so great as you might think. The born poet remains always a nympholept. He remembers, even when surrounded with affluence and royalty statements, that equivocal vision which in his youth did now and then, if but for the space of a heart-beat, appear to be a vital and tangible and near-by matter. It seems to be near him no longer in middle life; it thins; it comes more rarely: and by him it remains unattained forever. He questions the truth of this matter: and yet he cannot question those stinging, half-derisive memories of this matter, which keep him, even in his luxurious town home, and in his trim country residence, and in the warm arms of enamoured ladies, an outcast from the comfortable repetitions and mufflings of mature life.

He who has once heeded this matter, and who has not put it out of his mind resolutely as a mere delusion, can have no human associates; and he knows it. He is conscious of that never-ending loneliness which more mature persons drug with the routine of commonsense affairs. Among the well-satisfied he hungers after he does not clearly know what; there was but a silvery flashing, half-seen, not wholly seen, to awaken inexplicable desires: and he lives as the lost heir of a kingdom of whose existence he is by no means convinced.

Meanwhile he gives all time and labour to his art, to that insatiable fetish which demands not only time and labour, but requires also that its devotees' most private emotions shall be displayed in cold print. You have read, I am sure, during your endeavours "to become steeped in classicism", the old myth of Atys; and you thus know that a goddess may be served with unconscionable tribute. Well, and creative literature is not a whit less exigent than was Cybele. All decency and all reserve must the fond fanatic of letters give over to his art, to an art which he studies so zealously that in due course he becomes conscious of its unimportance in the continuous flowing away of time, which abducts all things, by and by, even the newest and most talked-about books.

Am I counselling you, it may be you will ask, not "to become a writer"? To counsel anybody about anything was not ever a custom with me, my dear sir. To write books has diverted me now for some thirty years; it appears to me, in my more reasonable moments, a singularly futile and childish and thankless task; and yet, for no reason ever revealed to me, I have enjoyed doing it. I am but pointing out (and proving, also, by the force of example) that the elect writer is fashioned not through any course of training but through his innate irrationality.

I must point out likewise that whatsoever follows the present stage in your career must necessarily prove an anti-climax. It is the de-

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fect of those notions which woo the elect writer in his youth, when they become apparent but have not yet entered his mind, that they do not ever surrender to his ardours wholly. All nymphs are thus evasive. They do, it may be, come a bit closer by and by, like unwilling models approaching an artist in whom they have no great faith; and to some degree each notion will consent, as it were, to sit for its portrait with marked restiveness. Then, while each tarries impatiently, the poor man does the very best he can with his adjectives and his commas, and he manages to catch, perhaps, a sort of likeness. And for the while he takes pride in that which he has done, not knowing his doom.

After a little, though, he notices that in some especial bit of work he has produced no supreme masterpiece. Upon every aging artist, I think, dawns in this way, very gradually, the horrible and astounding doubt that his genius may be not unparalleled in the world's history. It is a contingency at which no elect writer need ever glance in his youth.

But the aging author when he turns back to his beloved own books—and to so infernally many of them, too!—in which there was once no flaw to be discovered, in which but yesterday the sprightliest wit frolicked and so much of beauty revelled statelily, he does rather wonder to find these books pullulating, overnight, as it were, with the inadequate and the awkward. Sentences which he had remembered as being of his unalloyed best have taken on a flavour of stale pie-crust; here the rhetoric both lumbers and gushes, like a street-sprinkling wagon; and now entire paragraphs stun him with the bludgeon of his own dulness. There is, in brief, no more dreadful reading for any honest writer than he must find inevitably in his own books, after a while. Those lovely notions which so elvishly allured him into so much of heart-breaking labour are simply not apparent anywhere; they have hired him, for a lifetime, with fairy gold. And they themselves, he reflects, those comely and light nymphs, they are busied at their appointed task, very far away from him now, in search of still another stripling, who is not yet ensnared, but who already plans "to become a writer".

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A PORTFOLIO

PECULIAR APPARITIONS

by William Rose Benét

Author of *Strange Demises, Mysterious Knot-hole-Lookers-Through, Crime, Crime, Crime! Fascinating Suicides, Nick-o-Time or Escapes from Murder, Amazing Vanishings, Cute Corpses,* etc.

THE LITTLE BINCHLEY AFFAIR

Consider a rainy night in February, 1606. The watch is abroad[1] and other watches have stopped. The wind howls, the rain lashes the windy streets. Who is this trying to telephone at the lamp-post[2] at the corner? James K. Dotterel of Little Binchley, slightly the worse for wine after a convivial soirée with boon companions at the Horse's Neck. But we must retrace our steps. If you don't mind.

James K. Dotterel, a simple yeoman with a reputation unblemished during long years of residence at Little Binchley, Hants, by scraping farthings together had at last realized the dream of a lifetime—a trip to London, third-class.[3] Leaving his mount at Paddington, and feeling thirsty, he had made straight for the Horse's Neck, a maladroit tavern in a dismal purlieu of the city. It had been recommended to him by the Reverend Petherwick of his parish, as something to avoid. Later, at the trial, Alfred P. Hawkins, a costermonger, testified that when last seen Dotterel was observed pursuing an E by NE direction toward the haymarket, scudding under a bare poll. After that, during his lifetime, he was seen, by rough computation, and by various people, something like 8,377 times. But to return. I'm afraid we must.

The manner in which Dotterel afterward described the apparition was this: "Fog like. As you might say blue or bluish. All around me. Light from the lamp-post kinda muzzy in fog. Then I sees girt big figger, ay, wi' girt big fëace like zun a zetten, an' girt big hand come avore me and snatch seat o' britches an' rush me down Bow Street way! Scare becheeses out me.[4] But I gives un slip. Moonset come, flittermice go. I wëake oop in gutter."

This is all the evidence we have concerning this most singular apparition. James K. Dotterel, be it said, returned the next afternoon to Little Binchley on the 1:33 down-pack-horse, and spent the rest of his existence carefully cultivating vegetable marrows.

ORVIL OF THE RED FEET

We must picture ourselves[5] in Southern France in the wild days directly succeeding the '45 or the '52 or the '66, or along in there in the wild days succeeding pretty well. Bands roamed the country-side, marauding

[1] Watches began to be used abroad about this time—or some other time. Time meant very little to people.

[2] Possibly some error here, as the butcher-shops of the day furnished link-boys to light unwary travellers home. Telephones were a distinct anachronism, but there is evidence to prove that James K. Dotterel was in other ways ahead of his time.

[3] By *percheron.*

[4] *becheeses,* colourful colloquialism of the period.

[5] Or must we?

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bands[6] of discharged mercenaries, putting all to fire and sword. Chief of the most ferocious of these rebels was Orvil of the Red Feet. This appellation had been attached to him because of his practice of cutting off the feet of every seventh burgher he burned in the marketplace. These feet he kept under his pillow. The legend runs as follows:

Three generations later a benighted wayfarer in the Forest of Vinsauf[7] beheld a glimmering light low down among the trees, and following its beams came to a clearing in which apparently arose a stately chateau. The door being open, he had the temerity to enter its portal and traverse its gloomy halls lit only by occasional flambeaux and to the gills. So faring he arrived at a huge banqueting hall where seated alone at the table he descried a gigantic man of sombre mien with empty silver platters spread before him. And now to his terror he observed that round and round upon the tablecloth before this menacing figure ran, two by two, a series of naked feet slightly gory at the tops. Drawing nearer to overhear what the palsied giant might be muttering in his beard, the wayfarer caught the murmurings as of a great agony, and thought he could distinguish from the broken syllables the words, "Defeat! Defeat!"[8] In the next instant the entire apparition vanished and the traveller found himself sinking in a noisome bog, from which, fortunately, he was never extricated.

THE BLAMIRE PORRINGER

It is to Victorian England we must next turn. The scene is West Ham.[9] In this then fashionable part of London a scion of the Blamire family, still holding great estates in Northumberland, was seated with his nurse in the dining-room of "The Poplars", 18 Dreeping Crescent. In accordance with the best Scotch traditions[10] of the family he was being induced by his nurse to absorb a whole porringer of oatmeal. But the irascible blood of the Blamires ran strong and hot in the veins of the six year old, and suddenly, without a moment's warning, he pitched the whole mess through the open window. There ensued one of the strangest apparitions in the history of these phenomena. Several seconds after the silver porringer with its precious freight had disappeared through the aperture, a large head was visible outside the window, as if risen from nowhere. The most ghastly feature of this apparently suspended head was that the entire countenance seemed astream with some pale and veiling substance, resembling the birth-caul with which some children are born or, in our later times, the much-disputed ectoplasm of the spiritualists. As suddenly as it had appeared, the head vanished. Four days later the head-gardener of 18 Dreeping Crescent gave notice.

It may be added (and is added because the editor said the footnotes ruined the page otherwise) that young Gerald Hugh Stoughton-Stoughton Blamire, the youth under consideration, afterward distinguished himself in the Yorkshire R. F. A. militia and in the Biochemical Department of the Lister Institute of Preventive Medicine. *Recreations:* cycling and botanizing (Fungi). *Clubs:* White's, Black's, and Brown's Chop House.

[6] Elastically referred to in the authorities I have consulted as "elastic bands".

[7] Any wayfarer would be benighted to lose himself like that!

[8] Possibly with reference to one of the 70,000 religious wars in Western Europe.

[9] To be distinguished from the West Egg described by a prominent American writer, Mr. F. Scott Fitzgerald.

[10] Further evidence of these was the "scratching pole" erected in the West Ham garden and the hereditary habit of the Blamires of testing all monies acquired by the family by biting them with the teeth.

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THE MYSTERY OF THE LITTLE MILLINER

We may well complete our catalogue of unusual apparitions with the episode of the little milliner of Carker's Lane. London of the sixties had been invaded by the New Art. Long necks and red hair in ladies, lilies held in the hand, massive and uncomfortable furniture, mediaeval tapestries, decalcomanias, and bullrushes in Chinese umbrella-stands were all the rage. From *R.S.V.P.* everything had now turned *P.R.B.* Ruskin was in his element.

Emily Preydon-Mump could claim a family coat of Three Magpies with the words *Sneck Up*, and her near relatives possessed the right to quarter the name of Purbeck (Per Bend Azure and Jaundice: A Rattlesnake displayed). Nevertheless, Emily was but a little milliner's assistant in the much patronized shop of the Misses Whoops in Carker's Lane. But on the morning of June 7th, 1865, into that shop strode the famous poet, Adolphus Alighieri Queech, accompanied by a young man in a red velvet coat and floating green windsor tie, the latter destined vitally to change the future of the willowy and sloe-eyed little milliner. Introductions were effected. The young man in the velvet coat proved to be none other than Alpheus Nightingale, of the Shropshire Nightingales, playwright, wit, blond young *bon viveur*. Emily was persuaded to go boating with him Saturday week upon the Thames.

Behold the twain then upon a balmy summer's day, in possession of a punt complete with pole and cushions, drifting swan-haunted water in the vicinity of St. Swithin's Priory, intending lunch with a bottle of Bass upon some mossy bank in the shade of a weeping willow. While Emily reclines creakily-stayed in the prow, Alpheus punts brawnily in blazer in the stern. To make the more haste he leans hard upon his pole, just as Emily, intent upon the volume in her lap, is in the act of quoting to him those beautiful lines of Marmaduke George Cresset's,

My heart is but a hollow tomb
Where worms have room, where worms have room,—
And O the gilly-flower of gold
Rotting within the cold, cold mould!

But let us give the apparition as it appeared to the *distrait* Miss Preydon-Mump as she suddenly lifted her eyes:

"Lawks, I was never so! There was that long pole sticking up out of the mud, and there was that nice Mr. Nightingale all wrapped around it and kicking at the beaks of all them swans. And the punt drifting further and further away, the tide being so strong once you've passed the lock! Then the bank came between us, at a bend in the river, and I never saw that nice Mr. Nightingale again. Will you have an egg to your tea?"

SOME ODD BOOKS IN MY LIBRARY

EVERYONE, I presume, who has a specialized library finds that it includes a number of curious books, with almost incredible titles; and this is especially true in a collection such as mine, which deals very largely with occult and psychical subjects. Perhaps the cynic might suggest that these would be quite in keeping with the mentality of their owner, and have found their natural habitat. However, I believe that it is quite possible to have a keen interest in these topics and at the same time maintain a fairly

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sane and rational attitude toward life. Be that as it may, the fact remains that some curious tomes have found their way onto my bookshelves, and it has occurred to me that a brief account of a few of these might prove of interest and afford amusement.

Take, first, a singular work entitled *God in Disease, or the Manifestations of Design in Morbid Phenomena,* by James F. Duncan, M.D., Physician to Sir P.Dun's Hospital, Dublin. The American edition was published by Lindsay and Blakiston, Philadelphia, 1852. Titles of some of the chapters are "Of the nature of the design which disease is intended to accomplish"; "Of the existence of disease as affording evidence of design"; "On the phenomena of disease as illustrating spiritual truths"; "On the conduct of the physician as illustrating the dealings of God with his creatures." The text is as curious as the titles.

Another old book in somewhat similar vein is *The Theology of Inventions; or, the Manifestations of Deity in the Works of Art,* by the Rev. John Blakely, Kirkintilloch, Scotland. Robert Carter and Brothers, New York, 1856. Some of the chapters are "The Introduction of mechanical inventions a proof that they are emanations of the wisdom, power and goodness of God"; "Tendency of inventions a proof that they are of God"; "Scriptural evidence that mechanical inventions are of God"; "Inquiry concerning the source of that difference of conception with which the mind is wont to view the works of nature as compared with mechanical inventions." Imagine a chapter-title of that length today! These two books might be sent to Mr. Joseph McCabe to review. The result should be interesting.

Take again the following delightful work dealing with the subject of premature burial. I give a faithful reproduction of the title page: *Thesaurus of Horror; or, the Charnel-House Explored!! Being an Historical and Philanthropical Inquisition made for the Quandam-Blood of its Inhabitants! By a Contemplative Descent into the Untimely Grave! Shewing, by a Number of Awful Facts that have Transpired, as well as from Philosophical Inquiry, the Re-Animating Power of Fresh Earth in Cases of Syncope, &c., and the Extreme Criminality of Hasty Funerals: with the Surest Methods of Escaping the Ineffable Horrors of Premature Interment!! The Frightful Mysteries of the Dark Ages Laid Open, which not only Deluded the Roman Empire, but Triumphed over All Christendom for a Thousand Years! Entombing the Sciences, and Subsequently Reviving all the Ignorance and Superstition of Gothic Barbarity! By John Snart. . . . London: Printed for the Author, and Published by Sherwood, Neely and Jones, Paternoster Row: and sold by Darton, Harvey and Darton, Gracechurch Street; and all Booksellers in the United Kingdom. 1817.*

Whew! One is worn out before he begins the book. And who could possibly write such a book except a man by the name of John Snart?

Another book on my shelves is entitled *The Occult Arts and Sciences.* Some years ago, in reviewing it, Mr. Aleister Crowley observed: "This is a good book, which would be even better if the author knew anything of either art or science." Incidentally, another review of his (of a book, *Poems,* by Mrs. Boole) read simply: "The title of this book is a misnomer."

On another shelf is a book by Dr. Watson, giving a number of alleged "spirit messages." It is entitled *The Twentieth Plane.* As a matter of fact, it is rubbish: Socrates tells us how it feels to ride in a railway train, and so forth. Quick, Watson, the needle!

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Here is a book by a Mrs. Maria Remington Hemiup, bearing the title *Our World: the Earth a Revolving Engine with a Central Propelling Power.* Our author attempts to show why Newton was wrong and she is right, with the customary modesty of authors of this type. On the title page we read: "This work contains many original discoveries heretofore unpublished." Strange how science fails to grasp new facts.

More widely known works, perhaps, are Summers' *Geography of Witchcraft and* Notovitch's *Unknown Life of Jesus Christ,* which claims to give authentic data regarding Jesus's life between the ages of twelve and thirty. The titles of some of Aleister Crowley's books are also curious: *Book 4, Konx Om Pax,* and 777—this last a "magical dictionary" showing great erudition.

Many famous authors have supposedly returned and dictated new works, or finished old ones, through the instrumentality of "mediums." Among these may be mentioned Oscar Wilde, Mark Twain, Charles Dickens, and Carlyle. Dickens, for instance, left *Edwin Drood* unfinished; he supposedly returned and completed it, and a "spiritualistic edition" may occasionally be picked up, giving the complete story, as dictated by the spirit-Dickens. Some of this is really quite Dickensesque; but the majority of such books are hopeless. Regarding the work said to have been dictated by Mark Twain, a humorous situation arose soon after its publication. His estate brought court action to the following effect: This book is either a fake or a reality. If really dictated by Mark Twain, his heirs are entitled to the royalties; if not, it is a fraud and should be suppressed. I never knew the upshot of this, as the dispute was evidently settled out of court.

I may perhaps conclude by giving a few odd titles: *X + Y = Z, or the Sleeping Preacher; Theocosmia; Transcendental Physics; The Transparent Jewel; Wise Knut; Eyeless Sight; Spiritual Sex Life; Isis Very Much Unveiled; Mystic London; Is the Mind a Coherer? The History of the Devil; On the Cosmic Relations; Thirty Years Among the Dead; The Certainty of a Future Life in Mars; Are Mediums Witches?* It would be possible to continue this list over many pages, but the above will suffice. It need hardly be emphasized that the majority of these books are many years old, and are of only historic interest to the student of occult subjects today.

It may be thought that I have dealt rather lightly—even frivolously—with the literature of a subject to which I have devoted my life—Psychical Research; but of course there is a serious side to it, represented by a voluminous and serious literature. A more useful, if less entertaining, article could be written which presented a selection from the many really sound and illuminating books that have been published on this fascinating line of research—which I have often been led to call "the most interesting and the most annoying subject in the world".

HEREWARD CARRINGTON

DICK, TOM, AND THE FUN-LOVING SAM

Some forty-five years ago, a young man was struggling with his first long story —written on wrapping paper, in idle moments, in the small Elizabeth, New Jersey, stationery shop of which he was proprietor. As the narrative grew and its teller became proportionately more enthusiastic over it, he confided in his parents. His father told him he was wasting his time. His mother urged him to stick to it. The young author did, for

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18,000 words. He sent that story to the now long defunct *Golden Days*, a Philadelphia weekly, and received a check for seventy-five dollars.

The young man was Edward Stratemeyer, destined to become not only the most successful writer of American juveniles but indeed one of the most successful writers of all time. He was twenty-six when he earned that seventy-five dollars. Not long afterward he acquired the pen-name by which he was known to the boys and girls of the whole nation for more than a quarter-century.

One evening, when he was working on a short story intended for a religious weekly, he expressed a desire for a good assumed name to accompany it. His mother, who was sewing close by, reflected for a moment and then inquired if Winfield was not a good pseudonym. "For then", she said, "you may *win* success in that *field*". And she added, "If you are going to be an *author*, why not make it—the first name—*Arthur*?" Stratemeyer himself inserted the initial M. This letter, the Roman symbol for a thousand, was further symbolic of "Arthur M. Winfield's" hope that the books written under that name might reach a sale of perhaps 1000 copies.

The history of *The Rover Boys' Series For Young Americans* is a dynamically interesting chapter in Stratemeyer's prodigiously industrious career. His declared purpose in creating Dick, Tom, and Sam Rover was to get away from the English settings predominant in American juveniles even during the final decade of the last century; and these thirty books were probably the most profitable of all his shrewd scrivening projects. Surely they were the most popular. He wrote the first three volumes, about 180,000 words in all, during the early months of 1899. *The Rover Boys at School* came out in March, *The Rover Boys on the Ocean* appeared in September, and there followed in November *The Rover Boys in the Jungle*. Stratemeyer himself was the proud designer of the covers of the first editions of the earlier volumes.

The Rover Boy books established a new record in juvenile sales that is likely to stand unsurpassed for a long, long time. They have been sponsored by four publishers, three of whom are long since defunct. They have achieved, in less than thirty-four years, an unparalleled retail sale of more than four million copies.

Once Stratemeyer rose up in indignant defence of the Rovers. This was shortly after Corey Ford had parodied them in a series of sketches under the general title *Three Rousing Cheers for the Rover Boys*, published in *Life*. The sketches were intended to be humorous, but Stratemeyer couldn't see the joke. When Doubleday, Doran brought out the collection in book form, he greatly hampered its sale by demanding that the publishers either strike out the word *Rover* in the title and throughout the text, or face the unwelcome alternative of appearing as defendants in a $200,000 action for having "stolen his three characters for use in stories similar to his own". The publishers regretfully decided to substitute the words *Rollover and Over* in the title and *Rollo* throughout the text in place of *Rover*.

During his own boyhood Mr. Ford had been a devout worshipper of the Rovers, and later, as a fellow professional, a genuine admirer of Stratemeyer. He long cherished a desire to ask the elder man how he did it; but Stratemeyer, when approached by a mutual friend, declared that if Ford ever showed his face in his office he would throw him out the window. As Ford tells the story, Stratemeyer's window was on the eighteenth floor of a downtown Manhattan skyscraper,

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with a particularly hard sidewalk underneath, so he decided that discretion was the better part of journalism.

In the lean, formative days when he was learning his craft, Stratemeyer got a position as editor of Street and Smith's long defunct *Good News*. There came a time when this group let Stratemeyer out. Shortly afterward, Lothrop, Lee & Shepard published his first cloth-bound juvenile and the author sent a copy to Mr. O. G. Smith, his former employer, who laughed with paternal tolerance. Later he learned that Stratemeyer's sales were bringing in royalties of $20,000 a year.

Unaided, Stratemeyer wrote nearly two hundred books, which reached a total sale of twenty million copies during his lifetime. With the assistance of an army of ghosts, he plotted and edited more than four hundred other stories for young people published by the Stratemeyer Syndicate, whose annual turnover far exceeded that of many large publishing houses. He began copyrighting in his own name with *The Rover Boys on the Farm*, the twelfth of the thirty Rover Boy titles; only now have any of the books in this series reached the ignominy of cheap editions, and it will still be some years before their copyrights run out and they go the way of *Joe Strong* and *The Racer Brothers*. Stratemeyer died of pneumonia in May, 1930, when he was sixty-seven; but he will always be remembered as the man who won a fortune from that most precarious of all potboilers, the juvenile adventure story.

ELSA BYRNHOF

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JEAN GIRAUDOUX

by Milton H. Stansbury

For the reader equipped with an *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, a *Larousse*, an atlas, a mythological manual, an herbal, and a large supply of technical dictionaries, I no longer fear to recommend the incomparable Giraudoux. He prepares delightful and intricate knots, and he will not untie them for you. The cryptic allusions with which he strews his path soon reveal his intentions, and when he mentions Sakuntala, or a "dalaganpalang", he has no idea of providing further information on these subjects. He is an exacting Amphitryon at his literary feasts, and many a passage in his books will require a second reading. But in spite of every stumbling-block, one never measures with impatient fingers the diminishing pages as one reads, for, in the words of Jacques Boulenger, "nothing that Giraudoux says, not the slightest little thing, has been said before".

Though he is frequently imitated, and though he is only one of the many exponents of a similar literary creed, he has always been acclaimed the unrivalled master of his *genre*—if such a varied and prodigal production as *Siegfried et le Limousin, Suzanne et le Pacifique, Juliette au pays des hommes, Simon le pathétique, Adorable Clio, Elpénor, Bella, Aventures de Jérôme Bardini,* to name only a few of his novels, can be said to belong to any school but his own. Indeed the hours of entertainment he provides are quite outside all schools or creeds. And by qualifying this as "entertainment" I do not imply that one should regard his art lightly. Giraudoux makes us laugh and that is one of the most serious accomplishments I know. Therefore, if Giraudoux demands his reader's co-operation and makes him work for his diversion, the rare quality of this diversion justifies, perhaps demands, the arduous form in which it is presented.

But it is only the thorny coating, not the thought beneath, which disconcerts. Under this brilliant, if formidable, exterior, the most genial of virtuosi reveals himself. He is a scholar, but if he exploits his learning, it is only for the embellishment of his wit. In spite of the snake-charmers, the poets, the exiled Russians, the Interior Monologues, figuring in Juliette's expedition to the "land of men" (*Juliette au pays des hommes*), this young woman is at heart a simple and guileless soul, taking one last, chaste fling before returning to the handsome young fiancé awaiting her in the provinces. And with what curious knowledge of life she hopes to impress him as a result of her various adventures! "How little you know, Gérard! You are ignorant of the fact that the Assyrio-Chaldaeans did not believe in original sin. Ignorant of the date of the crowning of Sapor, perhaps even of his fall. Not aware that in the city of Saintes, it is a dog which rings the Angelus." The acquisition of these important facts, however, does not prevent the young lovers at their reunion from bickering over a new dressing-gown, or from throwing themselves into each other's arms.

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If Suzanne, after her six long years of exile on an abandoned Polynesian island (*Suzanne et le Pacifique*) has new visions of life, they assume no more disquieting proportions than her eagerness to return to cows and men, where she may have living "milk-trees", human "hug-trees", and perhaps an omelette.

It does not take long to discover that Giraudoux is having a thoroughly good time, not only amusing himself, but gloating, like a precocious child, at the prospect of a mystified audience. The audacity and the unexpectedness of his images are obviously intended to cause a gasp; and gasp, indeed, one does, until the rapid-fire succession of their acrobatics defeats its own end and leaves the reader stunned.

He is the least spontaneous of writers. Designedly artificial and *précieux*, his most inimitable witticisms are at the same time the most studied. It is on this very artificiality that he counts largely for his comic effects. By means of it, he can produce such passages as: "It was the week when the acacias perfumed the air, and we ate them in fritters; when the larks dotted the skies, and we ate them in tarts; when the rye became all golden and had its single day of triumph over the wheat, and we had pancakes." It is safe to assert that there is not a single banal line in the fifteen books or more that he has written, and this is largely due to the application of just such carefully calculated artifices. To avoid being commonplace he will resort to any trick. Fortunately his ingenuity is inexhaustible. Giraudoux's sun never does such a prosaic thing as "set"; it lingers for a moment behind the hills "like an actor ready to return at applause". When Suzanne's eyebrows are described, we learn that when it rained, they kept the water from trickling down her face; and, since they met, her nose was also sheltered!

Perhaps Giraudoux was one of those whom Gide had in mind when he wrote: "How fatiguing is that mania of certain literary men who cannot see one object without immediately thinking of another." Certainly Giraudoux is possessed of what Gide calls the "demon of analogy". Who else would compare small fish escaping from the rear of a cart to "tears in the dust"? What will he say, never said before, about a cloud? That it is "painted and powdered like Esther before her King". To be sure, one suspects at times that this imagery is rather the result of a system than of an inspiration. Yet even when far-fetched, his analogies are welcome if only for their fantastic associations of ideas and their sheer nonsense. That is why we are glad that Suzanne felt gaiety "hung from her face by a thousand clips, like a piece of linen about to flutter"; and why, upon encountering the Ugliest-in-the-World-Bird, she discovered in it "all the minor maladies so humiliating to tenors and young husbands: boils, corns, a sty, and a sneeze".

Equally arbitrary is his use of violent antithesis, usually recognizable as mere toying with effect rather than contributory to the thought content. Juliette has one warm hand so that the other may be cold. Giraudoux's young doctors have aged patients only, his old doctors have youthful ones; his song-birds perch above the mute-birds; his night-birds collide with his day-birds. We are not surprised, therefore, when in *Siegfried et le Limousin* Geneviève Prat describes the alternation of her lovers thus: "a man of mature years, a youth, a man of mature years, a youth, never a man of my own age. Every eighteen months I was certain to capture a white beard, to fall back again at the end of eighteen months on extreme youth and help my friend prepare his college examinations."

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Some critics find in Giraudoux a man of abnormally acute sensibilities, who perceives through strangely coloured spectacles a universe which the ordinary mortal must gaze upon with less enlightened eyes. This, to be sure, he does; but I am more inclined to regard him as an extraordinarily clever man who has very consciously adopted these spectacles. If he were not possessed of ordinary vision, how explain his invariable ability to depart from it? His usual procedure consists in first the simple statement of a thought, then its development by humorously realistic illustration. The more commonplace the thought the more original is the illustration, for with Giraudoux, it is the concrete example, not the abstract idea, in which his fancy is manifested. He tells us (*in Juliette au pays des hommes*) that Juliette was careful, and then he adds: "She was the girl who had lost the fewest handkerchiefs in her life." Her fiancé, Gérard, is introduced in the opening scene as a lazy, healthy young animal lying in the sun: Giraudoux wishes to say that his hero's physical well-being is of more real moment than all the social and material advantages acquired through the efforts of his ancestors. To drive home his point, Giraudoux balances these two ideas against each other, and piles up his comic effect. (1) Gérard is sucking a straw, and—equivalent blessing—he possesses 200,000 francs income. (2) A blackbird casts its shadow on his face, and—equal pressure on his soul, he is conscious of the silhouette of a rich, pure fiancée named Juliette. (3) The voluptuous itching of an eczema has attached his foot, and—he is a descendant of Guizot. (4) He amuses himself by playing with a thistle, and—he owns a Hispano-Suiza.

This presentation of the general in terms of the specific, the significant in terms of the insignificant, leads him into all forms of exaggerated statements so obviously and gratuitously absurd that no one would dream of contesting them. For example, Suzanne claims that striped antelopes should inspire a love for wise men and poets. His abuse of the superlatives "the only", "the last", "the most", et cetera, frequently makes him a rival of one of his own characters, the actress who with false ingenuousness applies the qualifying term of "first" to all her experiences, claiming a certain banquet to be the first occasion of her eating rice, and so on. He is inclined to sum up whole nations by some ludicrously concrete image. Germany suffers the most in this respect. Germany is the nation, he informs us, which "to pass its life and time, has invented beer, war, and the Jew's harp, and a large number of irregular verbs. It is the country where taxicab fares mount by 22½, and where horses find more shade in April at the foot of obelisks and mausoleums than under trees".

No character escapes his ridicule, not even his beautiful young heroines, sometimes the most clownish of them all. His nonsense may appear at the most unexpected moments. It may descend upon the archeologist who, upon seeing Juliette's eyes, one of which was blue, the other brown, was reminded of the cats of Ezeroum, which have one blue eye and one grey, this making the good man instinctively raise his voice, since these cats are deaf. Or upon American men "who come to France to study the architecture of happiness in the hearts of French women, thereafter departing at a gallop for Minneapolis to implant it in the hearts of gigantic young girls, usually named Watkins". It is worth struggling through all the obscurities of *Elpénor* to be rewarded from time to time with such preposterous bits as the picture of the Cyclops weeping as he milks his ewes, "his

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tears falling into his cream, which curdled, so that on that day he made the most delicious of his cheeses". Or his buffoonery may pursue every movement of a character, as in the case of Suzanne's governess, "all of whose possessions were shaky and fragile—two or three teeth, and a pin which closed badly. She returned every evening with a purchase and some part repaired: a hat of red duvetine when her eye-tooth was filed; a fan when her toe-nail was straightened".

Sometimes it is a whole chapter of grotesque fun, such as the account of Juliette's scuffle in the property room of the Opéra (*Juliette au pays des hommes*), where she seeks to avoid the kiss of the innocuous opera singer Boris. Here Giraudoux provides a laugh for every line, from the moment when Juliette feels all synthetic matter on her person disintegrating before the attack: her false pearls, her shoe-lacings of false leather, her hat pins of false steel, her right earring, which was of paste. The destruction of each object convinces her that women should adorn themselves in diamonds and platinum only, and be wary of adulterated wool and artificial silk. She frantically turns on gas jets and water spigots, hurls cosmetics, and snatches at wooden swords and pistols, her screams being mistaken for those of a rehearsing Rhine-maiden. She only extricates herself from her exhausted admirer's encircling arms by effecting a scratch upon him, the sight of blood attracting a solicitous band of Coppelias and Eurydices from the wings. The latter, mindful of infection and the fortunate monthly presence of the Walkyrie horse, recommend an anti-tetanus injection, Juliette meanwhile blandly accepting Boris's dinner invitation for that evening.

Frequently Giraudoux's wit is used as a piquant dressing to serve up his inner irony. He is caustic, but never bitter, in spite of certain pet aversions. The Comédie Française is one of these, with its "old Jewish actress speaking with an English accent and named Clorelle". Rarely does he praise foreign countries, though he is a prodigal in exposing their oddities—or what he chooses to select as such. The ship-wrecked Suzanne (*Suzanne et le Pacifique*), comfortably nude, speculates as to how men of different nationalities would greet her: the polished Englishman, extending his hand, would say "Excuse my glove"; the American pastor, draping her in his university pennant, would quickly make a photograph; while the German, installing her at a folding table in front of Pilsener beer, would condemn her to a kiss every time she forgot to close the pewter cover of her stein. Giraudoux asserts that when Americans were considered English, they fought against the English; when they became American, they had a civil war; and when sufficiently German in their culture, they flew to arms against the Germans—the first American to take a prisoner in 1917 being named Meyer, as was the man he captured.

Although a far traveller, Giraudoux is anything but international in spirit. Remaining resolutely French, his satire softens perceptibly when his native country is in question. France he desires to show as the "world's controller of weights and measures"; everything is superior there; its air is purer, its skies bluer. In *Suzanne et le Pacifique*, he pictures the harmony that a French mind, and a French mind only, can bestow upon the wilds of nature. The German way of meeting life on an uninhabited island is illustrated by Robinson Crusoe, who came from Bremen, as contrasted with the French, represented by Suzanne, who is from Limousin. The former, as Giraudoux reminds us, littered his island with household conven-

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iences such as porringers and stewpans, just as his nation was later to encumber the world with shop-made goods and tin-plate; the French girl, on the contrary, leisurely enjoys the facilities which nature has already provided. "You," says Suzanne to the imaginary Robinson, "you speak of the flavour of birds and never of their song. Don't work for three months to make a table: squat. Don't lose six months in making yourself a *prie-Dieu*: kneel down where you are." The fact that *Robinson Crusoe* was written by a good Englishman is of small importance, for Giraudoux has made his point. Perhaps he agrees with Oscar Wilde, who lauds those literary masterpieces where "facts are either kept in their proper subordinate position or else entirely excluded on the general ground of dulness".

Most of Giraudoux's books are riotous medleys of wit and satire rather than novels in the ordinary sense. The stories are at best fragmentary; the plots, episodic and very thinly sketched; nothing is farther from his thoughts than the creation of living people. Presented through their foibles only, their amusing or eccentric side, Giraudoux's characters amount to hardly more than droll phantoms, mannequins on which to drape his wit. It may be Emmanuel Ratier, who is so vain that he ceases to admire great men the moment he himself has passed the age at which their deeds had been performed; or Juliette Lartigue, whose eyes shine when she is hungry, whose mouth waters at the purchase of perfumes, whose nose quivers at the mention of God. In this entire gallery you will search in vain for a credible person—or, it must be added, a dull one.

To follow a character through a graduated psychological development would probably bore Giraudoux. Impatient and whimsical, he presents people ready-made, with a spotlight thrown now here, now there, on the feature he desires to emphasize. In *Simon le pathétique*, it is not unlikely that he has chosen a hero who is insane in order to indulge unchallenged his passion for grotesque, incoherent pictures. He is happiest when his subject-matter adapts itself readily to the bizarre and unreal, though he finds few situations too commonplace to be transformed by some odd twist into the strange and unaccountable. *Suzanne et le Pacifique* is one of his most successful works, for in this book he creates a wonderland to order. The exotic island where Suzanne is wrecked is an ideal hunting ground for his adventurous fancy; and in such a background this French Alice can indulge her author in his most unbridled vagaries. She can adorn her nakedness with red feathers, in the midst of a thousand gorgeous birds—all the flora and fauna of which Giraudoux has ever heard. She can have two blue parrots when she eats her bananas, two diving-birds when she opens her oysters, two orange wag-tails when she gathers mangos—a grouping typical of Giraudoux. Here the flowers taste like young pig or resemble soaps, and the caverns shine as though with electric bulbs from the reflection of the red birds entangled in them. Naturally the first fruit picked by Suzanne is exactly ripe, making her feel that "for thousands of years the race between her destiny and this mango had been timed to the second".

So nothing surprises in Giraudoux—or rather, everything does. Every extravaganza may be found, but never—and here he occupies a place almost apart among his contemporaries—the vulgar or obscene. The most modest girl need have no fear of him. Giraudoux adores young girls and is said to be eager to include them in his public. Certainly no more chaste books could figure

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on their shelves. A few women like Bella (in the novel of that name) have pasts, but Giraudoux's treatment is sufficiently delicate to satisfy the most punctilious. Of course, this is only mock decorum on his part—witness his clever and sophisticated use of innuendo —but it is decorum nevertheless.

Giraudoux's charm escapes dissection. I have permitted myself so many quotations because his flavour is better tasted than described. His error is his over-generosity. Mannerisms and tricks of style may repeat themselves so often as to create a banality all their own, and Giraudoux does not escape the monotony which results from too frequent imitation of himself. His abuse of analogy is as devitalizing as the adjectives and adverbs his analogies are intended to supplant. He is most thoroughly enjoyed in instalments, in chapters picked at random.

A place apart should be reserved for one of his latest books: *Aventures de Jérôme Bardini,* for this novel seems to indicate a new departure, as yet too embryonic to be characterized with any degree of finality. He abandons here his earlier manner and writes in much more sombre vein. There are fewer flippant and impertinent witticisms and his earlier inclination to dazzle and surprise is no longer so evident. Has he finally succumbed, alas, to the sober thinking of advancing age?

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CHRONICLE AND COMMENT

Life In Death

First George Moore, and then in quick succession George Saintsbury, John Galsworthy, and our own Sara Teasdale. The year while still young has brought home with shocking emphasis the obvious but disturbing truth which even lovers of literature are prone to join the rest of humanity in forgetting, though their passion is a constant witness to it: the evanescence of the flesh, the endurance of the spirit. The novelist and chronicler, the great appreciator, the social historian, the fine lyric poet, have left us, but they are still with us: the best of each of them, as they would themselves agree, is as living as ever it was, and will remain among us until the wheel of time has at long last transformed their living influence, together with all but some tiny fragment of our day, into history.

> But meet we shall, and part, and meet again,
> Where dead men meet—on lips of living men . . .

as Samuel Butler sang in Lucretian vein. Butler was attacking rather than defending something, needless to add—here the orthodox conception of immortality—but he expressed succinctly and not without eloquence at least one kind of immortality, the kind which is the very breath of the book-lover's life. There is sadness in seeing an old friend depart; but when the friend is a worker in the arts and has been permitted to finish his main task, there is also consolation and even cause for joy.

Some five years ago a contributor visiting the Bookman office referred to George Saintsbury as having died. Our protests that he was still living and active met with firm assurances that he had been dead some time; until at last we began to think that an event of moment might somehow have passed us by. To settle the matter we telephoned Saintsbury's publishers. "Is it true that George Saintsbury is dead?" we inquired. "Yes, that is right," came the prompt answer in a tone of finality. . . . Fortunately our doubts sent us inquiring further before perpetrating a premature obituary notice!

Working With George Moore

The remarkable article in this issue in which Mr. James Whitall tells of how George Moore collaborated with him on a novel concerning the early life of Moore's high-minded female character from Texas, finds something of a parallel in the now forgotten case of "Frank Danby", which created a considerable scandal in the London of forty-odd years ago. In 1889 there appeared in both England and America a curious novel called *Dr. Phillips*, by one "Frank Danby". The book, which concerned the ultra-orthodox, commercial, narrow-minded, Christian-hating stratum of Jewish society in the London of the time, was studiously avoided, because of its delicate subject matter, by all the critics; and yet it was read by thousands of book-buyers with absorbed interest over a period of five years and more. In the course of time it became known that "Frank Danby"

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was a lady who was an early and intense admirer of George Moore, and that the book had been written, if not with his actual collaboration, at least under his extremely close supervision. Let THE BOOKMAN's chronicler—the year was 1895—complete the story:—

This book when finished was taken by Mr. Moore to Mr. Vizetelly, the publisher, with a very strong commendation of its merits. Mr. Vizetelly read it over and saw its power; but owing to certain crudities of expression and the unnecessary coarseness of some of its details, he refused to publish it as it was. It was then revised, and, much to its advantage, the most objectionable features were partially excised.

Since that time, for reasons which no one seems to understand, a great coolness has arisen between Mr. Moore and his brilliant disciple; and a few months ago when [Mr. Moore's] *Celibates* appeared, "Frank Danby" made a most elaborate and aggravating attack upon the book over her own name in the *Saturday Review*. Mr. Moore is too old a hand to write answers to ordinary critics; but this stab, coming as it did from his own "pupil", was too much. He replied in the next number of the *Review*, emptying all the vials of his scorn upon his "pupil's" head. He disowned her as unworthy of him. He accused her of ignorance of the English language. He twitted her with her personal obligations to him. He insinuated that she was only a Philistine. He even called her a coarse-minded person. Altogether it is a very pretty quarrel; but it is a sad beginning for the creation of a great Moore school of fiction.

The way of the collaborator with Mr. Moore was evidently never too smooth.

* * *

Another early issue of THE BOOKMAN contains an amusing anecdote touching upon a point made in passing in Mr. Whitall's article: Moore's impatience with Henry James. Moore, in discussing the unintelligibility of the later James, is quoted as saying:—

James and I were once fellow guests at a certain country house. It was while I was revising the proofs of my *Ave*. In it I had written a line that I feared as I had put it might give offense to an old friend. It was on the simplest of subjects—about a professor of Trinity College, Dublin. I asked James if he would write another sentence for me with which to replace it, and I shall never forget the effect this request had upon him. He rolled his eyes like a man in convulsions. Then he snatched the proof from me and started for his room with it. Finally, he came down, having composed a line and a half. It looked profound, but what it meant I had no idea. However, I put it in. When my secretary came to type it, she asked me if it was written correctly, as she could make no sense of it! Later, when the book was being set up, Heinemann, my London publisher, came to me with the proof containing that sentence. "Will you please tell me what you mean by this?" said he. "Neither I nor my reader can make it out." I told him that I couldn't, and then explained to him who had written it.

I can never think of that without recalling my first meeting with that great French master, Jules Lemaître. At that time he had read nothing of mine, and he said, "Tell me, are you clear or are you obscure?" "I am clear, Monsieur Lemaître," said I. "I have not talent enough to be obscure." That remark seemed to please him.

On Intellectual Thrillers

NOTHING is easier for the inveterate fiction-readers than to fall into a rut. The clerk at the book-store, the attendant at the circulating library, friends who know his tastes, his own inertia, will all conspire together to make him sick of stories of one pattern. Sooner or later he will have a surfeit, and will take to biography or detective tales; or, if the malady takes a graver form, will give up print entirely.

For readers who find themselves in that sad predicament, we recommend a sure cure: *the intellectual shocker*. These books are none too easy to find. They come out obscurely, receive a word or two under "Detective and

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Mystery Fiction", and fail for the most part to reach the readers for whom they are ideally suited. The requirements for the pure type of intellectual thriller are hard to meet: there should be a good, tight plot, an author with a taste for the occult and the supernatural, a conclusion which refuses to beg any questions. Arthur Machen, for instance, is barred for weak plots; M. P. Shiel sometimes wobbles over his conclusions; and the maddening stories which turn out to have a prosaic explanation for mysterious occurrences go into the deepest limbo.

For English and American readers, Rider Haggard's *"She"* is the pure type of the intellectual horror-tale. It is probably too late to recommend the tales of Bulwer Lytton for popular consumption, but large libraries can supply copies of *Zanoni* and *Phra the Phoenician* for those who would like to know what curdled our immediate ancestors' blood. These are not mere Gothic tales which get nowhere; they are the fictionizing of reincarnation and astral bodies, done with unrelieved earnestness. Stories of the supernatural alone will not serve the purpose we have in mind: if you like them there are of course magnificent ones—M. R. James's collected Ghost Stories, De la Mare's *Seaton's Aunt*, and dozens of others—but they belong to a well known *genre* and are not likely to be overlooked.

Charles Williams is the modern master of high-brow horror. Unfortunately only *The Place of the Lion* has been published in this country. *War in Heaven, The Greater Trumps, Many Dimensions,* and *Shadows of Ecstasy* are every bit as good—our favourite, *War in Heaven,* is a masterpiece under almost any classification, and is fortunately still available from England. But for those who are new to the taste, there is an American writer who turns out very good ones: A. Merritt, whose *Burn, Witch, Burn!* has just been published by Liveright. Mr. Merritt, it seems, has his own "fan audience". We wish they had not been so quiet about him; it is all very well to read his previous *The Moon Pool* now, but consider the dealers who do not have it in stock and the readers who will never see that grand and gruesome story. A. Merritt is well worth looking up when the Hemingways, the Faulkners, the Dos Passos and the Dreisers begin to pall.

But the cerebral shocker is seldom written by an American; perhaps that is the reason why it is lumped indiscriminately with the detective stories for review, or overlooked entirely. Guy Endore's excellent specimen of the type, *The Man from Limbo,* went almost unnoticed. Fortunately Farrar & Rinehart, nothing daunted, are giving the reading public a second chance: Mr. Endore's *The Werewolf of Paris* has just been issued, and meets all the requirements of the most captious shock-fancier: good prose, good plot, and a hair-raising use of the werewolf legend. It is hereby recommended to all who are bored with clinical case-histories passing as fiction.

The Ubiquitous Mr. Walpole

WE HAVE often suspected that Mr. Hugh Walpole must have picked up some supernatural trick—bi-location, or even tri-location, at a hazard—on his trip to Russia, years ago. For at about the time *The Dark Forest* was printed it began to be obvious that Mr. Walpole could write two or three excellent novels and several critical estimations of his contemporaries, appear on lecture platforms, and read and report on almost every book put out by English and American publishers, all at the same moment.

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JOHN MASEFIELD

the English Poet Laureate, who has been lecturing in the United States this winter. A life portrait by Georges Schreiber, made when the poet passed through New York recently, and signed by him.

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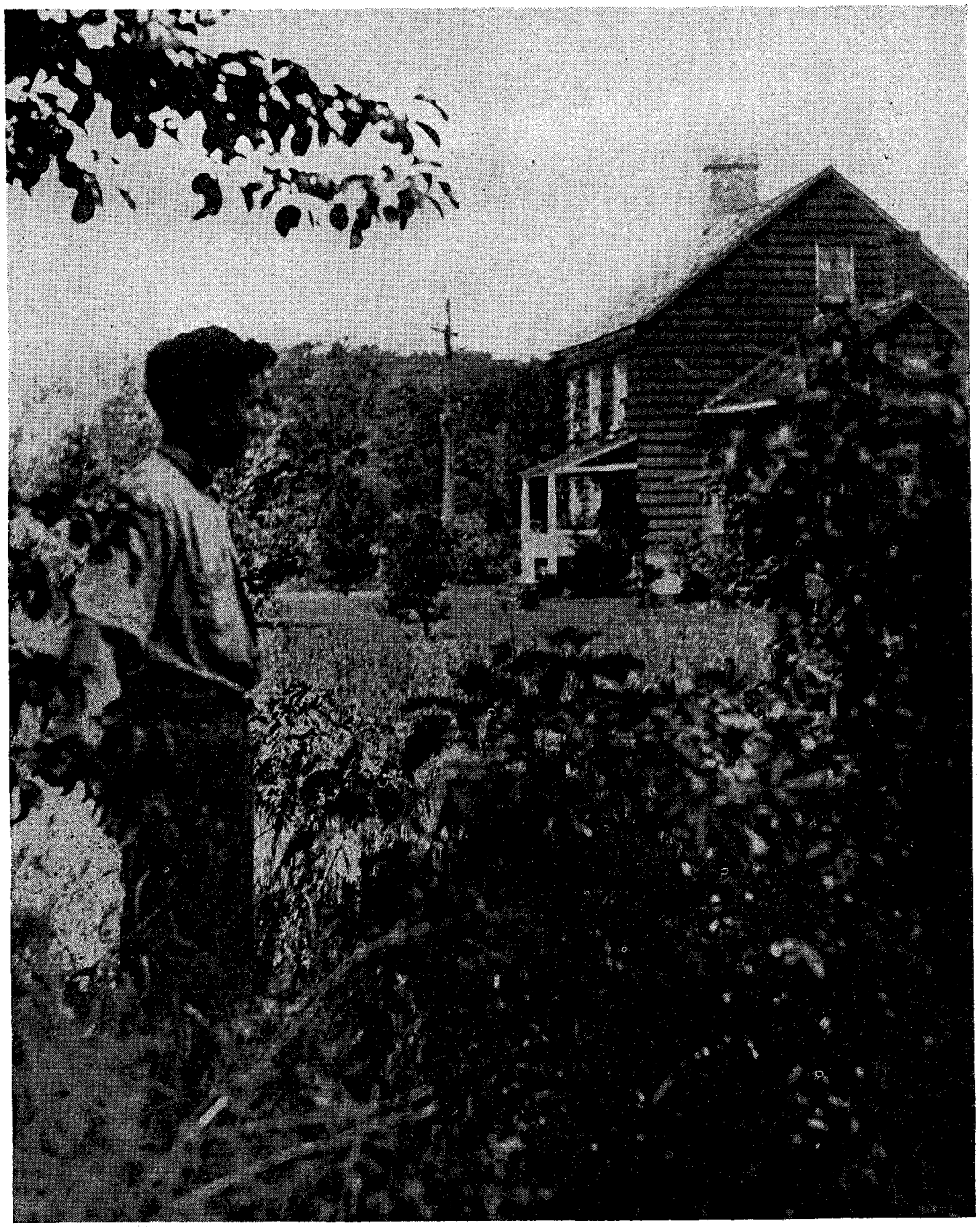

THE BIRTHPLACE OF WALT WHITMAN

The old house at Huntington, Long Island, where the poet was born in 1819. A literary landscape by Sherril Schell.

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HELEN HULL

(Right) author of "The Asking Price" and "Heat Lightning", whose latest novel, "Hardy Perennial", has just appeared. Her dog, "Punch", is the original of the dog that plays an important part in her new book.

BERNARD SHAW'S BIOGRAPHER

The chief participants in the meeting held last month at Chapel Hill, North Carolina in honour of Archibald Henderson, Shaw's biographer. Left to right: Professor Henderson; Professor Koch, head of the Carolina Playmakers; President Frank Porter Graham of the University of North Carolina; Percy MacKaye, poet and playwright.

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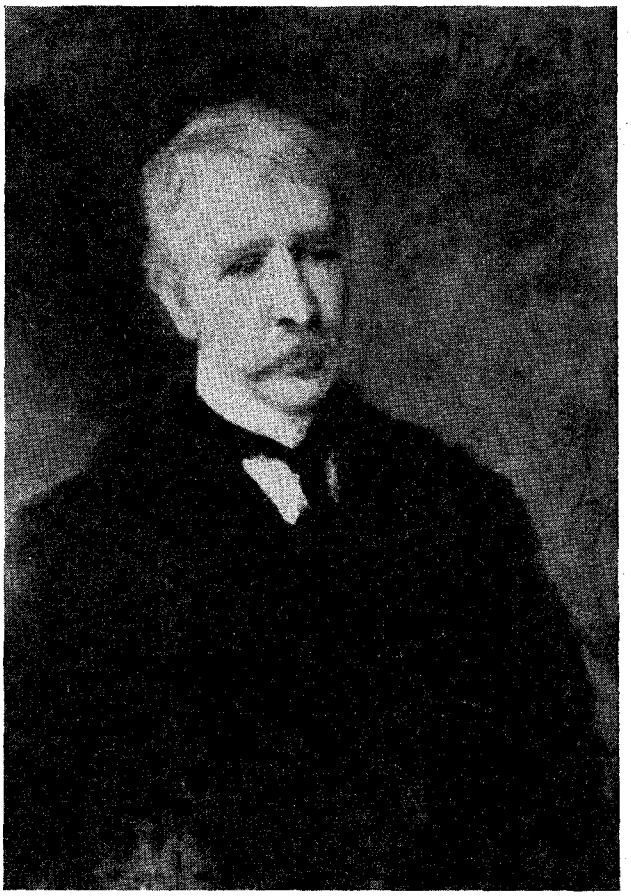
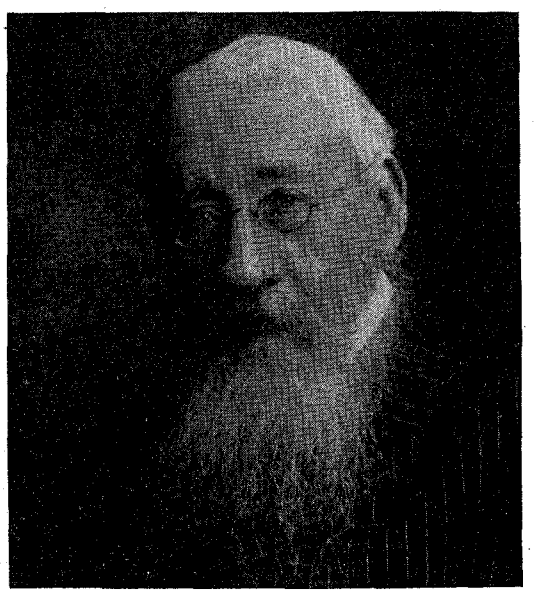


GEORGE MOORE

From the painting by Jack Butler Yeats, brother of William Butler Yeats, the Irish poet. An unusually revealing reminiscence of Moore's life in Ebury Street will be found in this issue.



GEORGE SAINTSBURY

whose recent death at the age of eighty-eight deprived England of one of her most respected and useful workers in literary criticism and history.

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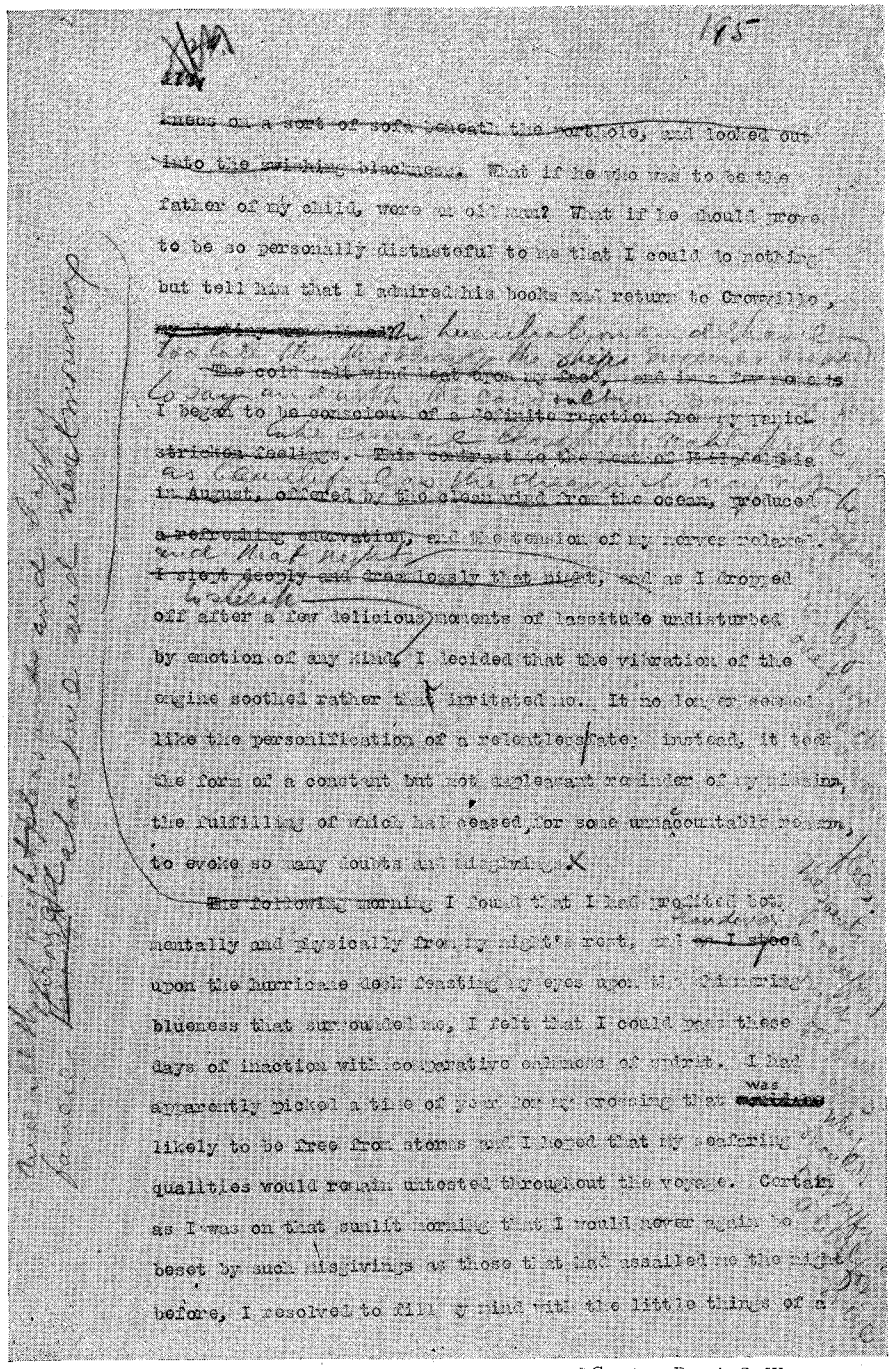

Courtesy Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach

ANNOTATIONS BY GEORGE MOORE

on a page of the manuscript of James Whitall's novel recounting the earlier life of the heroine of Moore's short story "Euphorion in Texas". The story of the collaboration, and of the subsequent banning of publication by Moore, is told by Mr. Whitall in this issue.

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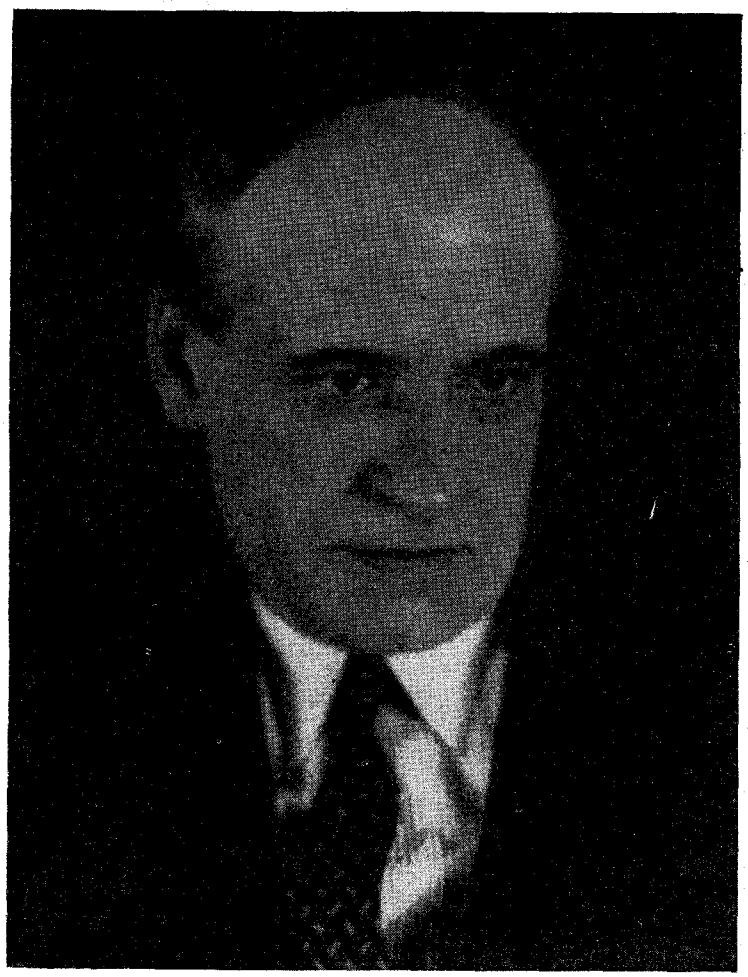

Lagos, Madrid

JOSE ORTEGA Y GASSET

A formal portrait and a snapshot of the Spanish philosopher whose "The Revolt of the Masses", published here last fall, has been hailed as a highly significant explanation of the problems of Western civilization. Last month appeared his "The Modern Theme", providing the philosophical background for the earlier book.

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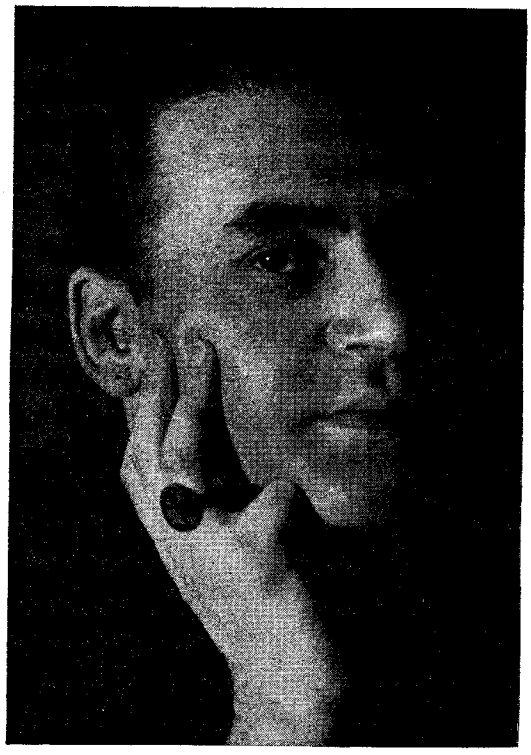
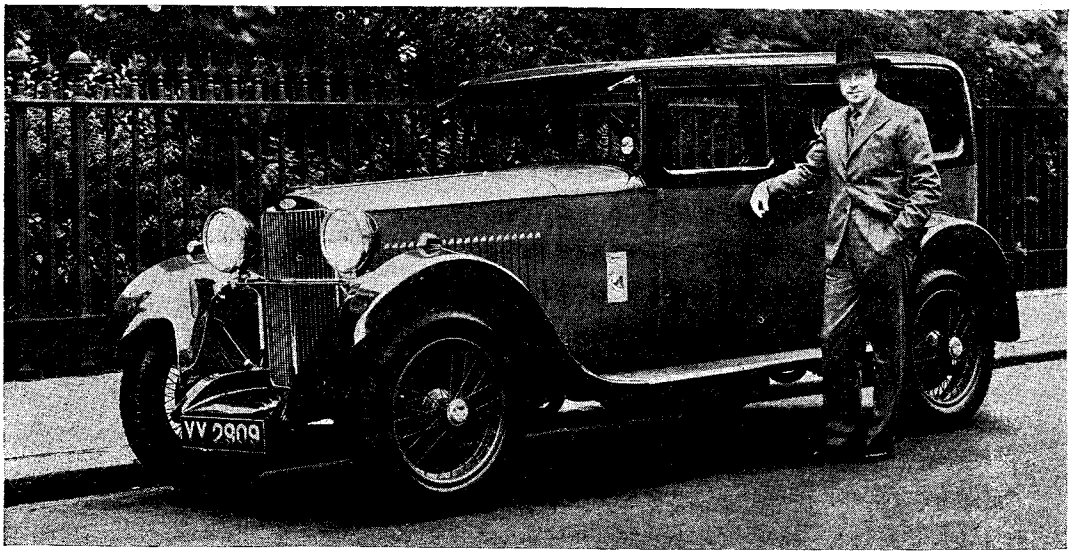


PHILIP GUEDALLA

whose "Argentine Tango", a brilliant impressionistic travel book about South America, is just out. Mr. Guedalla is now in this country.

ISABEL WILDER

who has just published a well-reviewed first novel, "Mother and Four". She is a sister of the author of "The Bridge of San Luis Rey".



DR. A. J. CRONIN

the British novelist whose popularity began in 1931 when he published his immensely successful "Hatter's Castle". His next book is "Grand Canary", to be published in May.

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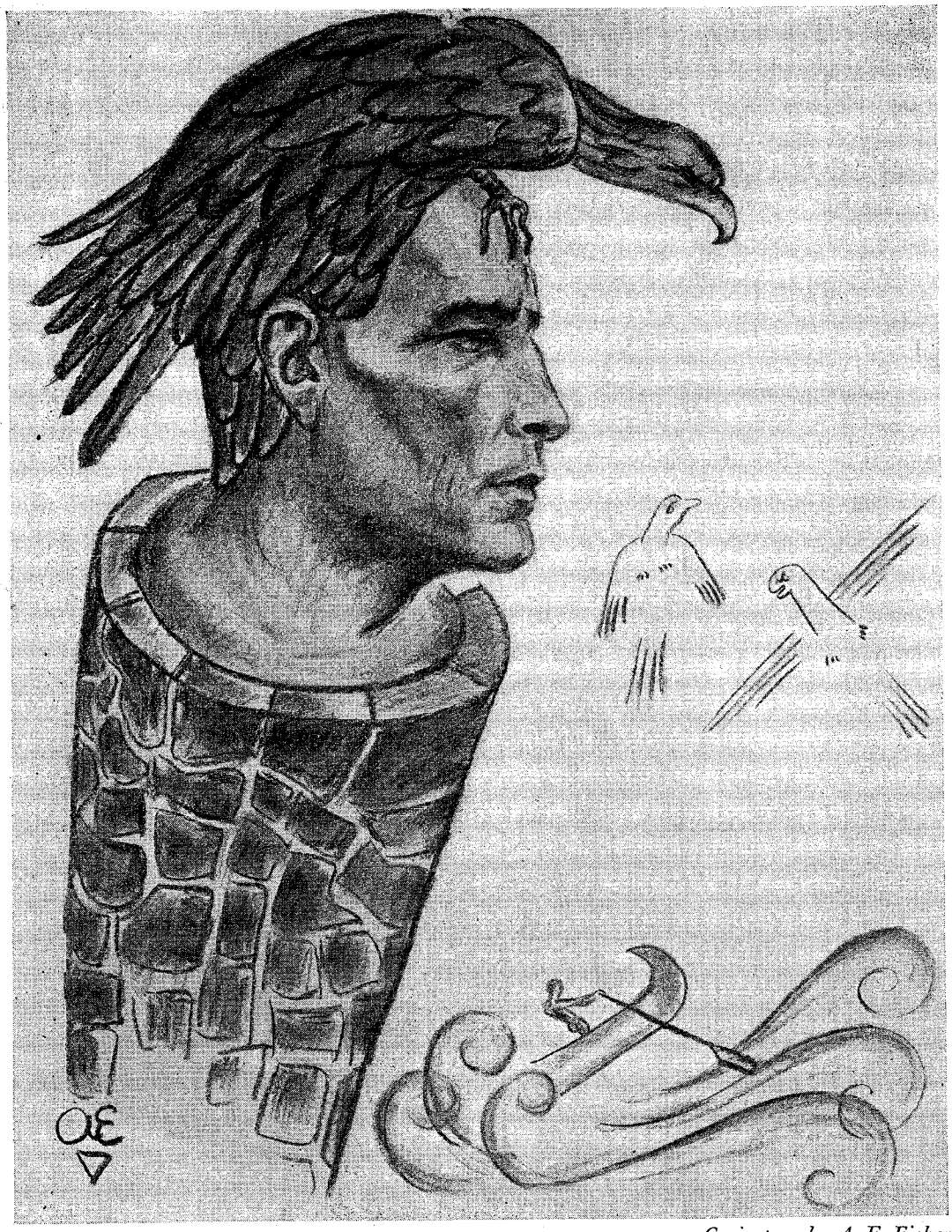

Caricature by A. E. Fisher

MR. ROBINSON JEFFERS EMERGING FROM HIS TOWER IN TIME FOR THE SPRING LISTS

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THE BOOKMAN did intend, at one time, to point out that these two or three Mr. Walpoles should be warned to keep in touch with each other, since the number of novels which were the best Mr. Walpole had read in a year seemed to hint that there was carelessness at headquarters. The same suspicion has occurred to others; the latest comment was made by "A. R. D." in *Punch*:—

HUGHANIMITY

From the Publishers' Lists

GNOMES FOR GNURSERIES
A Collection of Fairy Stories
Illustrated by I. Wrackem

Mr. Hugh Walpole says: "This is without any doubt the best book for the young that has ever been published, and I am giving it not only to all my godchildren but to myself."

SCORBUTIC SADIE
by U. B. Beastly

Mr. Hugh Walpole says: "I have read every word of this ruthless document three times, and I declare it to be, with a few exceptions, the best novel of our time."

JACOB'S BUSTS
A Critical Estimate of Epstein

Mr. Hugh Walpole says: "Never has the work of a sculptor of genius been so faithfully appraised as in this fascinating work."

ALL ROUND THE CLOCK
Choice Morsels for Readers at Every Hour in the Day and Night

Mr. Hugh Walpole says: "There is no anthology I have overlooked ever since I was a choirboy, but this I have no hesitation in stating is the best of all."

FROM HAND TO MOUTH
1,000,000 Cookery Recipes

Mr. Hugh Walpole says: "This is far and away the best assortment of recipes that has yet been published. I am giving it to my cook, which means that I am giving it to myself."

THE BARCHESTER MURDERS
by Mark Anthony

Mr. Hugh Walpole says: "This is the best detective story that has come my way for many years. It grips and baffles and appals."

THE BEAUTY OF BUTTERMERE
A Handbook to the Lake Country
by X. Cornwall

Mr. Hugh Walpole says: "There is no lovelier or more richly storied district of England than the Lakes, and there has never been a better guide-book than this."

WHILE I CAN STILL INVENT
by "Nonagenarian"

Mr. Hugh Walpole says: "I have been so enthralled by these reminiscences that I am prepared to defend the statement that no more attractive volume ever appeared."

THREE YEARS OF TASTE
A History of the Book Society
by The Committee

Mr. Hugh Walpole says: "As a record of unflinching public service this book is worthy of the deepest attention and the highest praise. I would go so far as to maintain that it amply and alone justifies the invention of pens, ink, paper and printing."

A Youthful Philologist

ONE of the most amusing tales of precocious literary youth we have lately come across concerns Henry Bradley, the English lad who grew up to be Senior Editor of the *New Oxford Dictionary*. It appears in a beautiful little volume just brought out by the Oxford University Press, entitled *Three Friends*, which contains Robert Bridges's essays on Dolben, Dixon, and Bradley. The late Poet Laureate has told the Bradley tale in his characteristic dry fashion:

The earliest record of Henry is singularly characteristic. It was before he was four years old, on the occasion of his being taken for the first time to church—the meeting-house, no doubt,

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of the Congregational community to which his parents belonged—when he obstinately persisted in holding his book upside-down. This eccentricity gave them some anxiety, until it was discovered that the child really could read, but only with the book in that position. Unknown to them he had taught himself during family prayers: while his father, sitting with a great Bible open on his knees, was reading the lesson aloud, the boy, standing in front of him closely poring over the page, had followed word by word and thus worked out the whole puzzle —and so completely, that long after he had accustomed himself to the normal position he could read equally well either way. His mature faculty seems to have been perfect in his infancy, and in this first picture of him Philology and Piety are seen hand in hand.

For Children, Poetry

THE *Cambridge Book of Poetry for Children*, which the late Kenneth Grahame compiled and edited seventeen long years ago, is out in a new edition, with poems by Hardy, Davies, Milne, De la Mare, and Bridges in addition to the old favourites, and a Christmas Tree verse of Kenneth Grahame's in first place. It is published here by Putnam.

It is a delightful book. Gwen Raverat has made the wood-cuts (more engaging to adults, if the truth be told, than to children, who often loathe the blackness and quaintness and stark lines), and the text has been reset to balance the pictures. There are rhymes and jingles for very little children, and old poems and rare poems under such classifications as *Seasons and Weather*, *Dream-Land* and *Fairy-Land*, *Story-Poems* and *When Knights Were Bold*. At one extreme there is *Off the Ground*, one of De la Mare's best, hitherto unknown to us, and there is the *Ode to the West Wind* at the other. In between is a little of everything; but, as in every anthology, not quite enough.

Where is the nonsense verse? Parents who must buy anthologies of children's verse for their offspring are not likely to be able to fill the gap themselves. Must a generation of babies arise who have never heard that

> Far and few, far and few,
> Is the land where the Jumblies live?

Are they never to hear of the Buffalo upon the Chimney-piece? Where is the Yongy-Bongy Bo and the Pussycat and her Owl?

And where are those lovely repetitive jingles that children adore, like *The Little Red Hen*? Or the "building-up" poems, of which *The House That Jack Built* is the most famous? Useless to plead that every child knows them; every school-teacher and librarian can tell you that children, in these sad, flat years, do not. *The Pied Piper* is not here, nor *The Ancient Mariner*, though it is safe to assume that, even if belatedly, those two will be met. But Edith Sitwell's *King of China's Daughter* may not be, unless a new edition of Walter de la Mare's marvellous anthology, *Come Hither*, can be re-issued.

Still, *The Cambridge Book of Poetry for Children* has a right to one of the best spots on the most accessible shelf of every home. The only real complaint against it is that it could not be three times as large.

Sherlock Holmes: Addendum

WHILE Vincent Starrett's articles on the private life of Sherlock Holmes have been appearing in THE BOOKMAN on this side of the Atlantic, British biographers of the great detective have not been idle. Within the last few months two books have appeared in London—*Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson*, by H. W. Bell, and *Sherlock Holmes, Fact or Fiction?* by T. S. Blakeney— which have

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caused considerable comment. We quote from E. B. Kellett's review of these two volumes in the London *Spectator*:—

I may, I think, claim to have been a devout, if humble, admirer of Sherlock Holmes ever since the documents on which we have to base his biography began to appear in the *Strand*. I was frightened by the *Speckled Band*, and so much moved by Sherlock's decease—which I still believe to have been his only one—that I broke out into elegy:

"Toll for the brave,
That was so strong and hearty,
Who tumbled in the wave
Along with Moriarty.
Ah, never shall we learn
The tale of that man's life,
Who took out his false teeth
And threw them at his wife.

"Let scoundrels all rejoice
Throughout our mourning land,
For Sherlock Holmes is gone,
Gone to a better Strand."

But, like all serious students of the subject, I was often sorely bewildered by the strange lapses and inconsistencies of the biographer—if, indeed, the biographer was one man and not, like Shakespeare, a syndicate. How account for the fact that a remarkable exhibition of thought-reading not only mimics a similar performance of Dupin, but is represented as having occurred on two totally distinct occasions? How could Dr. Watson have been wounded in but one place, and yet in two parts of his body? How, further, explain the anomaly that Sherlock, who is clearly represented as a Londoner of the Londoners, is almost always wrong on his *shalls* and *wills*—the one grammatical error that no genuine Londoner ever makes? They are, in fact, precisely the errors we might expect if Holmes had been a native of Northern Ireland. And if, as we are informed, he was a university man, how could he, as appears from the *Three Students*, be so completely taken in by what is obviously an undergraduate hoax? Unless the Oxford don, Mr. Soames, was in reality, as I suspected, Colonel Moran or Professor Moriarty in disguise, this narrative must, I was constrained to believe, be a fabrication of Dr. Watson's, who was thus subtly taking his revenge for the snubbings he had so often received from his partner. And how could *John* Watson be known to his wife as James? Macaulay, we know, made a similar slip in talking of *James* Graham of Claverhouse, and was soundly trounced for it by Aytoun; but we expect more accuracy in such matters from a wife than from a mere historian. And how could Holmes, who attached such importance to trifles, call the younger son of a Duke by the impossible title of Lord St. Simon? . . .

Here are new questions for the faithful. Let the good work go on: with so many able and devoted hands engaged in the task, before long all the moot points will be settled and all the material made available for that much desired Definitive Life of the greatest of detectives—and the most beloved character in fiction since Pickwick.

Gift-Books for All

THE publishers of Julia Strachey's miniature novel, *Cheerful Weather for the Wedding*, advanced its publication date to February 6th, and enclosed a slip to literary editors advising them that this move had been taken in order to enable customers to use the booklet as a valentine. The book jacket is a charming thing in cream, rose, and blue, with a bride's bouquet of the most conventional sort to emphasize still further its appropriateness for the occasion.

Upon reading *Cheerful Weather*, however, one becomes aware that cynicism must run in a deep undercurrent through the Viking Press. The tale is that of the wedding day of a girl whose managing mother has arranged a "suitable marriage"; the bride has one illegitimate child already behind her, left as a foundling in Albania; the friend of a happier summer drinks himself into trucu-

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lence in the library; while Dollie, the heroine, busy about her tiring in the room above him, fortifies herself for the ceremony with innumerable little drinks of rum.

The notion that this pretty tale (it is, by the way, excellently written) is the perfect valentine gives rise to the reflection that other publishers might comb their lists for gift-day editions of their classics. What could be more suitable for Father's Day, for instance, than *The Way of All Flesh*, neatly boxed? *Penguin Island* is the perfect confirmation present, with *Elmer Gantry* to follow for those who reach the happy eminence of ordination. *The Brook Kerith* or D. H. Lawrence's recent *The Man Who Died* will do nicely for Easter and Christmas.

For brides and grooms and young, proud parents there is an embarrassment of riches. *Jude the Obscure* springs to mind, with Upton Sinclair's *Love's Pilgrimage* and Dreiser's *The "Genius"* tying for second place. For national holidays, again, the possibilities glut the imagination: Masters's *Lincoln the Man* for February 12th, W. E. Woodward's *George Washington, the Image and the Man* for the birthday of the father of our country, with *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Dos Passos's *Three Soldiers* and William March's *Company K* in special red-white-and-blue boxes for Memorial Day and the Fourth of July. Those under the shadow of bereavement could get *The Spoon River Anthology*, while all of Faulkner's books, of course, would lend themselves to any day of jubilation.

* * *

This reminds us that a leading New York bookstore innocently carried Logan Pearsall Smith's *Tales from the Old Testament*, with its jeers at the patriarchs from Moses to David, on its religious gift-books table for months on end. The demand for it must have flagged long ago, but the irreverent seeker in the same store may now find Glenway Wescott's subversive *A Calendar of Saints for Unbelievers* in the religious books department, cheek by jowl with Maritain and Dean Inge.

Simplification

PERTNESS has lately been a trying characteristic of biographers; Boswell may well be dizzy from a whole series of turns in his grave. What would the old note-taker have thought of this one, appearing in the author's addendum to one of a series of new biographies of famous men being brought out by a well-known American publisher: "Those who expect more conventional views should look for them . . . [elsewhere]. . . . But for myself, I am obliged to say that I addressed most of my questions to Ruskin himself and had the temerity to supply the answers." Here is a simplification of the biographer's task that leaves us gasping at its sheer impertinence, and wondering why we had to wait till 1933 for such a revelation.

The Bohemians

ONE of the most memorable portraits in Albert Parry's recently published picture-gallery of American Bohemia, *Garrets and Pretenders,* is that of Walt Whitman sitting, watching, and being worshipped amid the hurly-burly of that hub of New York Bohemianism, Pfaff's Saloon at Broadway and Bleecker Street. This was in 1860, when Whitman was forty-one—just in the midst of the awe-inspiring series of editions of *Leaves of Grass*, but before the War and before he had become "The Good Gray Poet" described in Mr. Bradley's article on another page. He already had a flourishing set of whiskers,

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however, and undoubtedly thought of himself as an elder prophet before his time.

Walt Whitman was indisputably a part of the scene, but he only sat, watched, and was worshipped; no one thought of designating him the chief of the Pfaffians. Once he took Emerson to see them, but the sage called them noisy and rowdy firemen and could not understand what bonds they claimed with Walt. Emerson did not know that Walt was aware of his superiority to all these ruffians, but that he loved adulation and found plenty of it at Pfaff's. There he was the shrine to which Clapp brought the faithful.

Once he mistook Howells for a member of the faithful and warmly shook his hand as the chaste young Ohioan was angrily leaving the cellar. Whitman did not know who Howells was and still less what he was destined to become, but he liked to play his rôle of a benevolent celebrity and shake strangers' hands with hearty magnificence. A legend has it that once, at Pfaff's, espying a young man who worshipped him from a distance, he crossed the floor to the stranger's table and allowed majestically: "You may speak to me if you wish."

Whitman, as may be gathered from the foregoing, was in this lively group, but not of it. He disputed amicably with the great Henry Clapp, King of Bohemia and publisher of the hair-raising *Saturday Press*, who once said to him: "Walt, you include everything. What have you got to say to the bedbug?" Whitman, it is to be suspected, secretly worshipped the then Queen of Bohemia, the striking Ada Clare, that strange short-haired young woman (her real name was Jane McElhenny and she came from Charleston, South Carolina) who took literary and artistic New York by storm in the 1850's: at any rate his tribute when she died from the bite of a mad pet dog was characteristically flamboyant: "Poor, poor Ada Clare—I have been inexpressibly shocked by the horrible and sudden close of her gay, easy, sunny, free, loose, but not ungood life." And many readers may remember his memorial to Pfaff's itself, in the poem which begins with the lines:—

> The vault at Pfaff's where the drinkers and laughers meet to eat and carouse,
> While on the walk immediately overhead pass the myriad feet of Broadway.

* * *

Mr. Parry's book describes in such amusing detail the varying phases of the pose which successive generations of Americans have called "Bohemian" that it is a temptation to quote indefinitely. He tells the story of how Trilby came to be written—no less an aesthete than Henry James insisted that Du Maurier put the story in book form, after hearing it from the Englishman during a walk in the countryside near London—and of the consequent frightful sprouting of Trilby shoes, Trilby phrases, and Trilby morals all over the eastern United States. He writes of Bohemia in Boston, of Bohemia in Philadelphia, of Bohemia in San Francisco. Forgotten figures appear and glitter momentarily—Henry Harland (BOOKMAN readers will remember Mr. Parry's article on this curious American editor of *The Yellow Book* in the January number), Stephen Crane, Vance Thompson, James Huneker, Harry Kemp, John Reed, Randolph Bourne, Belle Livingstone, Edmund Clarence Stedman, William Winter, and dozens of others.

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THEY'RE WONDERING WHAT YOU'LL READ

by Fred C. Kelly

A CLOSE friend of mine, a famous actor, used to entertain little groups of acquaintances by an amusing monologue based on the career of an old man from his home town. The character he used in his monologue had never actually existed but he had known a man enough like him to give the general idea. We always referred to it simply as The Story. I had heard my friend tell it so often I had learned it by heart and sometimes I used to tell it myself. Many of my own friends wrongly thought I had originated the story.

One day I came upon an advertising circular containing a stupid version of this same tale. The writer had tried to improve it by making it vulgar, and by introducing citified slang which threw it entirely out of key. I wrote on the margin of this advertising circular a brief paragraph: "Look at this. Some numbskull has tried to plagiarize your yarn", and sent it to my actor friend, the originator of the little monologue.

When I saw him, two or three weeks later, he said: "If people are going to steal that story, I'm tempted to put the true version into book form and publish it myself. If you'll help me in its preparation, we'll divide the profits."

"Don't be silly," I admonished him. "It is a thoroughly amusing little story when told as a monologue, but would never do as a book. Its merit lies in the homely absurdity of its humour; because it is on the border line of vulgarity, most people who might read it would see *only* the vulgarity and miss the humour. You might perhaps sell five hundred copies, but those who read it at all would simply think of you as a man who tried to write a vulgar book. Forget it."

He went away and I thought no more of his proposal to put the monologue into book form until I learned that the book was not only on the market but was a best seller. In due course its sales reached nearly a million copies, instead of the five hundred I had predicted, and the author made about $100,000 profit, half of which, if I had accepted his suggestion to collaborate with him, would have been mine. The book to which I am referring was, of course, Chic Sale's *The Specialist*. There was, indeed, "gold in them thar hills".

Ever since then I have had a sympathetic feeling for publishers who make a faulty prediction and turn down a book capable of a big sale. Such wrong estimates of a book's golden possibilities do often happen.

Trader Horn was turned down by at least four ordinarily shrewd publishers, and perhaps by even more than that; at any rate, the manuscript was badly tattered and dog-eared from many readings before it reached the office of the firm which finally published it.

To mention one more example: Several years ago, a novel, or mystery story, ran serially in *Munsey's Magazine*. It was the first serial written by a new author, a woman. By way of encouraging her, Bob Davis, edi-

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tor of the magazine, with his customary courtesy and willingness to oblige, offered to find for her a publisher who would bring the story out in book form. He sent it to four or five good publishers in New York with whom he had friendly relations, but one by one they all rejected the manuscript. He then mailed the manuscript back to the author, along with a letter in which he regretfully told her of his inability to find a publisher. "I still think it's good," he wrote, "but have not been able to find a publisher who shares my opinion, and I am therefore passing the buck to you."

The author was in her library when the postman brought the manuscript back to her. She decided to send it to the first publisher she thought of. Knowing little of the field, she walked across the room to a book shelf to pull out a book at random to see who had published it. This chance selection was a red book. (Its color made it a little more visible than others nearby on the same shelf.) The woman found on the title page the name of a publishing firm in Indianapolis, and she promptly mailed the manuscript to them.

Two days later the editorial director of that firm was on the train en route to see this author at her home in Pittsburgh. He was so favourably impressed by the sales possibilities of her story that he took along with him blank contracts for the next three books she might write. The book in question was *The Circular Staircase*, by Mary Roberts Rinehart.

From all this it may appear that since one publisher turns down the book which makes a fortune for another publisher, the business of selecting books must be governed by chance rather than by scientific knowledge. But publishers say their failure to predict accurately which books will succeed is not because the feat cannot be performed, but rather because they have not learned how. Book sales and people's tastes in reading *are* to some extent predictable—though perhaps less so than in almost any other line of business.

A few facts about the reading tastes of the majority of people are fairly well established. To mention one example of no special importance, almost any public librarian knows that the peak of interest in *astrology* comes in spring months, but the majority of those who read about *astronomy* do so in the autumn. Most reading is done, *not* in December and January when the days are shortest and the long evenings might be expected to induce sitting at home with a book; it is done in February and March—probably because the weather in many localities is then much more disagreeable than when the evenings are longest, and also because the social season is on the wane.

One thing which may definitely be predicted about a book is that it will not be successful, nor a good seller, unless it is *as good a piece of work as the author is capable of doing*. It is fatal for the author to try to write *down* to his readers. So far as I can learn from conversations with publishers, there seems to be no record of a successful book in which the author deliberately wrote trash, while capable of doing better, because he thought such a book would sell. Sincerity is a prime requirement.

But these are general forecasts of reading behaviour and cannot always be applied to specific books. What a publisher wishes to know when considering a manuscript is: How many people would be interested in this, and how can I induce them to buy it, without spending more money than I can afford to let them know there *is* such a book?

Right or wrong, when a publisher decides to bring out a book, he has in mind some

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reason why he thinks it should reach a reasonably large group. Frederick Allen wrote a book called *Only Yesterday*, a history of the nineteen-twenties. The publisher evidently figured on the number of people in the country who were a part of this history, who had seen the events related in the book actually happen, and who had shared the feelings described in connection therewith. These people could thus have the fun of reading about *themselves*. His forecast that there were enough such people to insure a good sale proved to be correct; the book's sales soon reached 90,000.

Occasionally, plans for a book are so carefully laid and so logical that it is almost certain to reach the expected sale. An example of this is James Truslow Adams's *The Epic of America*. The publishers were seeking just such a book. The job was done by a man who had already gained a reputation not only as a colourful writer but as an author of other successful books, covering several phases of American history. Moreover, the book came out at a time when comparative frankness in history was possible; it was, in a mild way, a "debunking" book. Almost immediately it began to have a good sale and was soon on the list of best-selling non-fiction. Yet the sale was hardly more than the publishers had expected. They had known what they were about all along.

When the American publishers of *All Quiet on the Western Front* brought out that book, they made all preparations for a sale of at least 100,000 copies. It had already been a big success in at least two or three languages, and this success rested on sound psychology. It was the first book to give, with fascinating detail, the life and viewpoint of the average soldier at the front. Moreover, it came out long enough after the War for the former soldier, his family, and his friends to be convalescent from their first disgust with war and willing to read about it again. The book actually sold nearly three times as many copies as the publishers expected. When the next book by the same author appeared, however, the total sale was a little less than expected. But it was more than 70,000—a decided success.

If an author has done two or three successful books it is comparatively easy to make a fairly correct guess as to the number of copies of his next book that can be marketed. Even in a case where a man has written no previous book, but is well known in a totally different field, it may be almost equally easy to estimate how many people would be interested in a book bearing his name.

Several years ago, when Sousa's Band was filling an engagement in Indianapolis, the personal representative of John Phillip Sousa telephoned to the publishing firm of Bobbs-Merrill and told the editor, Hewitt Howland, that Mr. Sousa would appreciate the courtesy if the editor would call at Sousa's hotel.

Sousa explained to Howland that he had written a little novel called *The Fifth String*, and as it was not a long story he would like to read the manuscript aloud to him then and there. Howland agreed and reclined comfortably on a couch in the hotel room with a couple of good cigars, listening while the great band leader read the little novel that represented his first exploration in the field of literature.

It may not have been a great story but it was not bad, and Howland estimated that there should be fifty thousand people in the United States who might be curious to see what so famous a musician could accomplish as an author. His firm published the novel and, sure enough, they did sell about fifty thousand copies.

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In a general way, books may be divided into three classes: (1) Those that should interest a relatively small number of highly intelligent people. (2) Those that should interest a large number of readers lacking high intelligence. (3) Those of such broad appeal as to interest everybody.

A book of the first type may be brought out because of the prestige it lends the house that publishes it, even though its publication is unlikely to be profitable. The number who can appreciate its merits may be distressingly small. (Which recalls that I once heard Stephen Leacock say: "If I could afford to, I'd like to write a book so good that *nobody* would read it.")

Sometimes, unfortunately, a best-selling book belongs in the second class—intended for people of only moderate intelligence. Many novels, comparatively trash, have sold in greater numbers, and brought more money to their authors for serial rights, than novels of infinitely more merit written by such elders of American literature as Booth Tarkington.

Producing books that interest the mass of the people but are never found in homes of genuine culture isn't quite what an ambitious publisher would like to do. The ideal is to publish books of such high merit and universal appeal that *anybody* who chances to pick up the book wants to read it. The quality which makes this book sought by hundreds of thousands of readers is its power to arouse real enthusiasm. People not only like it; they like it so well that they buttonhole their friends to tell them about it. Except, perhaps, for the modern "speakeasy", there is nothing to which word-of-mouth advertising is so important as to a book.

Now, how is a publisher to know in advance if a book is the kind that will stir a reader's enthusiasm to the point of making him a shouter for it? The answer is simpler than one might think: employ an editor whose reading tastes conform to the reading tastes of the crowd. Of course the one great difficulty about this is that one must first locate and catch such an editor; but occasionally it can be done. It is no secret that Mr. Lorimer's success as editor of the *Saturday Evening Post* is due in a great measure to the fact that he buys what interests *him*. Since he has wide range of enthusiasm and great curiosity, whatever interests Lorimer is almost sure to interest a vast number of others. If a book editor is blessed with a point of view representative of a great mass of people, he does not need any further test of a book's probable success than that he himself can't lay it down.

One afternoon some years ago, Mr. Frederick A. Stokes closed down his desk a little earlier than usual and told his associates that he wished to hasten home because he could hardly wait to get back to the reading of a manuscript which he had been compelled to lay aside when he rushed to his train that morning. "If the rest of the story is as good as the part I have read," said he, "we are going to publish it and I'm willing to bet it will be a success." A success it was, too—*The Garden of Allah,* by Robert Hichens.

Many publishers have a whole board of editors and assistants whose composite tastes are supposed to be representative of the taste of the public at large; but if one editor can be found with the kind of genius which makes his mind a test-tube for the crowd mind, his opinion is more important than that of all the others.

To help him test his feeling about a book, an editor may systematically ask himself a list of questions. Such a list, in use in the office of one of the most successful New York houses, may read somewhat as follows:

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1. How important or how interesting is the purpose of the book?
2. How well does the book achieve this purpose?
3. How large an audience may be expected for a book with such a purpose, so achieved?
4. Does the editor personally enjoy it?
5. Is it news, by virtue of message, novelty, author, or special situation?
6. Is it likely to receive conspicuous, important, or favourable reviews?
7. Does it say something worth while not said by any other book in its field?
8. Is it reasonably free from danger of justified censorship or suppression?
9. Is it *sincere*? Does the manuscript seem to express 100 percent what the author feels? [Probably this question regarding sincerity is the most important of all.]
10. How much money are we willing to bet on the answers to these questions?

Sometimes confirmation of a publisher's belief in a book's sales possibilities is slow; but the publisher must feel all the more satisfaction when such confirmation finally comes. Not so long ago Mr. John Macrae, head of an old firm, and one of the grand old men of the publishing business, was in London arranging for American publication of a number of books of European origin. Just as Mr. Macrae was about to start homeward, an agent placed in his hands a rough, unbound copy of one more book which he heartily recommended. The publisher read this on his way home and liked it well enough to buy from the British publisher a few hundred sheets, that is, printed pages of the book not yet bound. Mr. Macrae liked the book so well that he felt almost duty bound to offer it to the public; and in this way, because of the comparatively small expense, it could be tried out at a minimum of risk.

The book sold barely 500 copies in the first eight months following its American publication. Of this number nearly 150 copies were sold in one book store. It later came out that a salesman in that store liked the book so much that he kept recommending it to customers, and the copies he sold probably accounted for the book getting a start. Everybody who bought it began to talk about it. They said it contained what is commonly known as human interest, and episodes showing a certain quality of human sympathy. It took the readers behind the scenes and gave them bits of vicarious adventure.

Though eight months getting under way, sales of the book began to go by leaps and bounds. When the publishers saw the book finally showing signs of vitality they were shrewd enough promptly to make liberal advertising appropriations and did all they could to bring the work to the public attention. They spent $75,000 in exploiting it. It became a best-seller and continued to be a best-seller constantly for more than two years —*The Story of San Michele.*

Mention of John Macrae recalls that he nearly always wears in his necktie a little ornamental pin, and back of this pin is a story. It was given to Mr. Macrae by his former chief, then head of the publishing company. Years ago, this publisher found on his desk the manuscript of a novel. It seemed meritorious enough, but at that time he was not much interested in fiction, concentrating his efforts on more serious books. He therefore called up his friend and fellow publisher, Henry Holt, and said to him: "We have a fiction manuscript here that perhaps you would like to publish. As you know, we don't handle much fiction, but it might be suitable for you. At any rate, I'll send it over to you." Henry Holt published the book. Several months later he came to the office of the man who had sent the manuscript over to him and said: "I came to thank you for

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your thoughtfulness in delivering that piece of fiction to us and as a testimonial of our appreciation I want to give you this little scarf-pin."

"Oh, yes," replied the other publisher, "I remember the manuscript but I don't seem to recall the title. I hope you have had good luck with it. What was the name of it?"

"It is called," replied Mr. Holt, *"The Prisoner of Zenda."* Whereupon the other fellow almost fell off his chair, for *The Prisoner of Zenda* had broken all records for sales, and James K. Hackett, a leading popular actor, was appearing in a play based on the story, with great success. The publication had brought the Holt firm a fortune.

Considerably longer ago than the period when *The Prisoner of Zenda* was an outstanding best seller, another publishing firm nearly let a fortune slip through its fingers because of uncertainty about a certain phase of public psychology.

A carefully prepared novel manuscript had come to Harper & Brothers. There were no typewriters in those days, and this had been faultlessly penned in neat, legible script. The author was widely known as a general of the United States Army. The manuscript had plenty of story quality; there was no question about its being interesting; but there was a grave question of the propriety of publishing it, because it seemed to violate good taste. Christ appeared as a character, and this, it was feared, would be resented by a great mass of Christian people. The editors hesitated for several weeks before they finally determined to go ahead and publish the novel. To their utter amazement, the great rank and file of conservative, Christian folk who, it had been feared, might criticize the book, praised it most highly. The book was *Ben Hur,* by General Lew Wallace, of Crawfordsville, Indiana, and it is hardly necessary to say kept its place on the best-selling list for several years.

Many a ten-strike has been made by a publisher on a book that fell into his lap by the merest chance. Mrs. Douglas Robinson, sister of Theodore Roosevelt, then just becoming a popular figure, dropped in one afternoon, many years ago, to see her friend Major Putnam, and laid on his desk a little book she had picked up in England. "Here is a book," she said, "I believe you might wish to publish. I thought I would bring it to you."

Major Putnam did publish it and it swept the country like wildfire—a little book, with a thin, little story, by one Beatrice Harraden. It was called *Ships that Pass in the Night.*

Every now and then a publisher is even more correct in his judgement of a book than he himself can foresee. If he has solved the problem of determining wisely whether to publish a book or let it alone, he nevertheless runs into surprises as to how successful a well-chosen book may become. Influences which make sales of a book multiply are so varied that even after estimating them wisely there is still room for the unexpected. One of the strange facts about the great sales of *Trader Horn,* for example, was that it began to feed on its own popularity. Its initial success depended upon the interest aroused in an odd old character. Once the book had a good sale, this old chap was even more of a character. He was transformed from a poor, obscure pedlar into a celebrated co-author, rich and famous. We all like Cinderella stories, and for a man to rise from poverty to fame and riches, late in life, aroused so much interest that everybody wished to make contact with the old fellow. The only way to make contact was by reading his book.

The same publishing firm stumbled into pay-dirt when it decided to publish a little

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book called *The Art of Thinking,* by a now well known French abbé. The editorial board was convinced that while this book could hardly have a large sale, they might count on selling between seven and eight thousand copies, which should bring enough profit to justify their investment. Sales never stopped until they had attained a figure of more than a quarter of a million.

As if that were not enough good fortune for one publishing firm, they were prompted to consider publication of a book made up entirely of material that had previously been published in fourteen small sections which sold for five cents each. While they naturally did not advertise this, yet they made no secret of the fact that *The Story of Philosophy,* by Will Durant, had been previously published and was still available for seventy cents, if one wished to have it in its cheaper form, instead of paying five dollars to get it in a single volume. The book went along quietly, and finally, when 8,000 copies had been sold, the author did the unheard of thing of asking the publishers to stop further advertising.

"I never counted on a sale of more than 10,000," he said, "and since you have come near to that, I have no complaint. But I don't want you to throw away any more money on advertising."

The publishers, however, were willing to risk a little more. They believed that with proper effort they could sell another 10,000 copies. Then came the surprise. Those next 10,000 copies must have fallen into hands of people who were especially enthusiastic and did nothing but boost the book. Sales began to mount and kept right on until they were measured not by tens of thousands but by hundreds of thousands. And the author, in spite of his initial protests, reaped a fortune.

Regardless of all these surprises as to which books people will read at a given time, the fact remains that when we walk into a store and buy a book, we are contributing our part to a definite pattern. The publisher had reasons for believing that you and I and a few thousand others would buy whatever we do buy. If publishers were wrong too often in their efforts to predict which books will interest us, then publishers would all lose money and finally be forced out of business. Good publishers have come to know pretty much what they are doing.

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THE PRIX FEMINA AMERICAIN

by Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant

On February Second Willa Cather received, for *Shadows on the Rock*, the first award of the French *Prix Femina* to be made in the United States. This honouring of one of our finest American talents is in a large sense fitting, although the book in question—dealing with French Quebec in the seventeenth century—is less well adapted to the avowed purpose of the prize than *O Pioneers, A Lost Lady,* or almost any of the author's works.

In theory—"preferably", as the Constitution of the American Committee has it—the prize-winning volume should be one which, in addition to literary distinction, will increase in France the understanding of American life and culture. But *Shadows on the Rock* was a leading book of the year 1931-2—of that May-to-May year ordained for purpose of selection—and as against the two other books recommended by the American Committee, *1919* by Dos Passos, with its modernist pattern and disintegrated picture of Peace Conference Paris, and *State Fair* by Phil Strong, whose humour has a strongly provincial, not to say porcine flavour, the choice of the French women was for the recognized, or "classic", literary figure. At home, in Paris, it is the unknown talent, the "coming" man or woman who is honoured with this prize. On this side of the Atlantic the situation may prove a bit different, because with few exceptions the most distinguished American authors are scarcely even names to the French. Our Gallic friends have been much less interested in our literature than we in theirs. Even if an American author is translated into French—and most of Willa Cather's books have been translated these many years—the chances are that he or she has been scarcely read or understood outside a small circle.

It is obvious that the annual award of this French prize to an American book will inevitably have the effect of widening the Frenchman's knowledge of our present trends and accomplishments. The costs and risks of translation and publication in France are borne by Hachette, a leading Paris publisher. The American author will receive the usual translation royalties; and of course additional advantages will come indirectly from the increased sale of other works and the wider comprehension of his talent.

II

No doubt the award of the *Prix Femina* to a woman will confirm many American readers in the assumption, suggested by its title, that this is a prize for a woman's achievement. Such is not the case; both in France and in the two foreign countries where the award is now made, it is offered for distinction and originality in literary work, regardless of the writer's sex. The *Femina* in the title comes from the fact that the judges are women.

The prize in France is no new thing, as it is with us; it dates back nearly thirty years, to 1904, when a group of literary

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French women decided that it was high time that the judgement and contributions of women should be considered in awarding literary prizes. The French academic prizes might be given to and by men without stirring many ripples, for after all these prizes were not especially coveted or significant. The prize that this group of brilliant women particularly had in mind was the un-Academic *Prix Goncourt*, endowed in perpetuity by the fortune of the Goncourt brothers, to foster new and original talent as opposed to the academic and stereotyped. As France had had distinguished women writers for several centuries, the fact that this latter prize was given by men only to men only seemed—yes, even thirty years ago, in the unfeminist land of France—an affront to the gifts of women. So the women said: We will found a prize of our own, and not be so narrow-minded as our brother authors; we women will be the judges, but we will give our prize to the best talent, be it male or female.

So came into being the *Prix Femina* as a definite rival to the *Prix Goncourt*. It is well known literary history that the twenty-five women of the group, who included the Comtesse de Noailles, Mary Robinson Duclaux, the Princess Murat, Marcelle Tinayre, and Madame St. René Taillandier, were not without guile or even malice. They chose the next café to the one frequented by the *Prix Goncourt* judges for their meetings and votings, and their final vote was taken on the self-same day as the vote of the *Prix Goncourt* jury. Indeed, by getting through this business of the vote a bit more expeditiously than the gentlemen, they not infrequently stole the candidate whom the male group had intended to honour. From first to last, the *Prix Femina* has been a thorn in the flesh of the older foundation; but beyond that it has really signified a "feminist" offering—a tribute to modern woman and the fruit of her work in the world.

III

The prize remained local to France until 1919, the great year of international friendship. The foundation was then fifteen years old; it had achieved weight and reputation, for its awards had proved themselves, and its members, who are appointed for life, had also proved their powers of critical judgement. The vote to extend the prize "to all the important foreign countries"—a decision made in the genuine belief that international friendship could be fostered by intellectual exchange, by the interpretation of a country offered by its literature—was doubtless, as such gestures invariably are in France, a *quasi*-official act, approved by the courts of diplomacy.

The expansion has, however, not been swift; the French, after all, prefer to move slowly. The English Femina prize was founded in 1919—a court of female intellectual judgement, twenty-five strong as in France, with many leading women, such as Virginia Woolf, Rebecca West, and Lady Gregory. In 1920 the return compliment was paid in the establishment of the Northcliffe Prize—offered through the English Femina Committee—the English judges issuing final judgement on a French work, as the French on an English. Now, after twelve years' proof that two groups of women can collaborate across the English Channel, the *Prix Femina* has been extended to the United States, in the hope that the Atlantic will prove no barrier to similar understanding. So far there is no *Prix Femina Allemand* or *Italien*, but we are assured that these will be established in due course. Meanwhile the United States, with only the English Committee as ancestor, may within limits create its own tradition.

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IV

Since authors are invited to submit their books, and publishers are asked to make recommendations for this Femina Prize, which will now stand as one of the events of the American literary year, it is important that the regulations under which the Committee is to function and the conditions of its founding be understood. The pivot of the American Committee is Mme Jeanne Dauban, a Frenchwoman living in New York, the wife of an Oriental scholar and herself a lecturer on literary subjects. Mme Dauban was chosen by the Paris Committee as its "Permanent Secretary" with power to select an American Femina Prize group and act as its liaison officer with General Headquarters; that is, with Paris. After finding her way in and out of our diverse literary groups (a process which must have been confusing to a foreigner) Mme Dauban emerged last year with her twenty-five Americans chosen, according to *Prix Femina* precedent, from among authors, critics, and "women interested in the arts". The authors are not merely local to New York; they include Edna St. Vincent Millay (President), Mary Austin, Ellen Glasgow, Julia Peterkin, and others; and whether absent or present, these authors have the same voting privileges on the prize awards as the members regularly able to attend meetings. Two subsidiary administrative groups are chosen wholly from New York women, because of the necessities of the committee meetings; the first includes Irita Van Doren and Amy Loveman; the second, Mrs. Dwight Morrow (Vice-President), Mrs. Henry Goddard Leach, Mrs. Learned Hand, and others.

The first year this committee got up on its legs, but was a bit wobbly in its movements; this year, it begins to feel full-fledged, as it has acquired a Constitution, a Chairman, an Executive Committee, and a method of procedure that seems to promise disinterested results. It holds monthly meetings in New York and is getting down to its principal job of compiling a working list of the books of the May-to-May year, which can gradually be narrowed to three recommendations of prize calibre suitable for translation into French. Poetry is almost automatically excluded, drama is also difficult to translate; so the list reduces itself practically to novels, with a few outstanding plays or biographies of an especially "creative" variety.

A secondary job of the committee is to "crown" one of three recommended French books with the America-France award, which, thanks to Mme Jeanne Dauban, has been established here on the same basis as the Northcliffe Prize in England, save that it carries with it no financial endowment. Harcourt, Brace have gallantly consented to translate and publish the French prize book as Hachette does the American, and on approximately the same terms. The members of the American committee were not originally chosen for their ability to read French, but it now becomes evident that in order to exercise their function, they need not only a basic reading knowledge of the French language, but much more: a thorough familiarity with the main stream of French literature today, as well as its many tributaries.

On the whole, the membership in this organization is no sinecure—especially for the New York members—and the virtue of the undertaking, so far as the American jury goes, rests on disinterested intelligence. If one waives the question as to whether literary prizes are desirable at all, and whether, if desirable, they should be given every year, there remain in an international collaboration of this sort, many complex factors which

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do not at first meet the eye. Assuming that the prize book should preferably be one that is "representative" of American life and culture, what if the outstanding American book happens to be about China or Russia? What if it is one that gives an "unpleasant" picture of the American scene—or of the French scene—as *1919* certainly did? What if it deals, as so many of our outstanding recent books now do, with the crude stuff of life in a way that a Catholic culture will never countenance or understand, because it has never known the suppressions of Puritanism?

Again, what if eligible books of the year are written by the actual members of the committee? This is almost certain to happen from time to time. In France, books by members are not considered; the award is to the beginner. Here, it seems hardly possible to exclude works by Mary Austin, Dorothy Canfield Fisher, and equally important writers from consideration. In the event that they are considered, should the author-member retire permanently or only temporarily from the committee? Retire she must, for the time being at least, if the committee is to avoid the dangerous reproach of feathering its own nest in its awards.

These are not hypothetical questions; they have actually arisen and are typical. But there is another kind of question that arises because —stated frankly—it is not easy for American women of varying ages and backgrounds, but with a common heritage of feminist freedom, to collaborate across the Atlantic and through an interpreter with a group of French women of more conservative and "diplomatic" tradition, who are, furthermore —as the French organization is thirty years old—largely of an older generation. The committee of the American Femina Prize is not as yet very unified; yet it must, like the parliament of a dominion (rather than as the congress of a free republic), communicate with a French committee rich in tradition and justly proud of its achievement. While in certain respects it is inevitably subsidiary to this central government which has created the prize, the American committee must still manage to be true to the laws of its own culture.

It is clear that the American committee, as at present organized, though desirous of preserving all the amenities, is bent on giving honest and serious judgements about its own literature, rather than judgements pleasing to the women of another culture and psychology. Indeed, it assumes that in the interpretation of the psychology of the United States, as expressed in leading contemporary literary works, lies its intellectual mission and its most fitting relationship to the committee of an older land whose great writers, as Willa Cather pointed out in her beautiful extemporaneous speech of acceptance of the first prize, have been models for all lovers of great literature. The value of the American Femina Prize in these changing times, and of the America-France award as well, will undoubtedly depend on the integrity and devotion of its committee members on both sides of the water to just such an impersonal cause.

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THE BOOKMAN'S SURVEY OF THE NEW BOOKS

A Selected Shelf 280

THE LIFE OF WILLIAM BLAKE *by Mona Wilson*—ARGENTINE TANGO *by Philip Guedalla*—THE STUART PRETENDERS *by Sir Charles Petrie*—STUDIES IN SUBLIME FAILURE *by Shane Leslie*—THE MEMOIRS OF SATAN *by William Gerhardi and Brian Lunn*—THE CULT OF WEAKNESS *by Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr.*—AMERICAN FIRST EDITIONS *by Merle Johnson*—THE LIFE OF RICHARD WAGNER: VOL. I, 1813-1848 *by Ernest Newman*—MARIE ANTOINETTE *by Katherine Anthony*—BULA MATARI: STANLEY, CONQUEROR OF A CONTINENT *by Jacob Wassermann*

Six Novels REVIEWED BY DOROTHEA BRANDE 290

THE LOVELY LADY *by D. H. Lawrence*—WHO GOES SAILING? *by John Connell*—TO THE NORTH *by Elizabeth Bowen*—SHE WOULD AND SHE WOULDN'T *by Hélène Eliat*—SUBLUNARY *by L. E. Martin*—MOTHER AND FOUR *by Isabel Wilder*

Keeping Up With the Novelists 295

ERIE WATER *by Walter D. Edmonds*—HARDY PERENNIAL *by Helen Hull*—THE KNIFE OF THE TIMES *by William Carlos Williams*—SAUNDERS OAK *by Robert Raynolds*—MADAME MAILLART *by Claude Aveline*—LET THE HURRICANE ROAR *by Rose Wilder Lane*—AWAKE *by Susan Prior*—YE DRUNKEN DAMOZEL *by Simon Jesty*—THE BOAT OF LONGING *by O. E. Rölvaag*—BLACK CABIN *by Green Peyton*

The Bookman's Guide to Fiction 304

A handy annotated check-list of current fiction, including novels reviewed in the previous two sections.

The Younger Poets 306

At a Glance 308

Compressed notes on publications in various fields of non-fiction to which THE BOOKMAN desires to draw attention.

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A SELECTED SHELF

THE LIFE OF WILLIAM BLAKE *by Mona Wilson* (BALLOU. $3.50)

THIS book, originally published in 1927 by the Nonesuch Press as a limited edition, was well worth making available to the general public at a lower price. Blake's very nature —half madness, half genius if you will— was such that he has fallen a prey to every pseudo-mystical enthusiast who has had the perseverance and the luck to find a publisher for his idle vapourings. Miss Wilson's pages have the advantage of being fresh air, without an admixture of that cynical incredulousness so irritating to an admirer of Blake, and so common in his critics.

It would be too much to hope that Miss Wilson's fine scholarly equipment should be accompanied by insight equal to the deep realities of her subject. Not that she is scornful of this seer of visions; but she falls into the state so condemned by Saint John: she is neither hot nor cold; and there is therefore a tendency, in the mind of any so intemperate an admirer of Blake as the present reviewer, to spew her forth. Yet this would be unfair, for she has done a patient job of gathering together the all-too-scattered fragments of Blake's known biography, and has subjected them to an altogether fair scrutiny, so that her volume may perfectly well serve as an answer to those questions concerning the poet-artist's natural life which are inevitable to anyone attracted by his spiritual works. Miss Wilson's lukewarm quality is particularly to be noted in her long and excessively tedious analyses of Blake's Prophetic Books. There is no reason on earth why these should form a part of any biography; allusion to them, and some general description of them and the manner in which they were written, are appropriate and pertinent; but the reader who is asked to wade through a Stygian Bog of obscure summaries, interspersed with long quotations, has a perfect right to object. He would do better to wrestle with the original canon, so readily available in the splendid editions published both by the Oxford University Press and the Nonesuch, than with Miss Wilson's positively Gallic paraphrases.

It may perhaps be questioned whether the general reader need have any interest at all in the life of so difficult a talent as that of William Blake. Here is an artist who has laboured in his reputation under a great difficulty, a difficulty which is likely always to come between his reputation and his just deserts. He, more than any other man, divided his talents between two realms of artistic expression: the verbal and the pictorial. No proper appreciation of Blake's abilities is possible except in the light of both his graphic and his poetic gifts. Take either separately, and he is a minor figure. Take the two together, and his stature is that of one of the giants. It is almost universally true that a critic competent in one of these spheres is blind (despite lip-service) in the other, and so Blake has been left to the amateur, who may legitimately aspire to some interest in both. Yet how many enlightened amateurs are there in any one generation? How many to whose attention has been drawn this lone-

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ly figure, midway between two unfortunately dichotomized realms—English art and English literature? If Miss Wilson's book will serve to make the professors of literature look at Blake's drawings, and the professors of art read his poetry, it will have performed a miracle. And that will be a miracle indeed, for what professor of one has any inkling of the other? But to all admirers of this extraordinarily endowed artist who "kept the Divine Vision in time of trouble" (Miss Wilson's own apt quotation), the book will be welcome as containing the only available scientific and scholarly account of his exterior and natural life.

HARRY LORIN BINSSE

ARGENTINE TANGO *by Philip Guedalla* (HARPERS. $3.00)

ON A winter's afternoon in 1806 Admiral Popham brought his fleet up the Rio de la Plata, and for six weeks King George was lord of Buenos Aires. Since that fiasco, the British sword has not troubled South America: and if the British pen has been more insistent, it has not, if we are to believe Mr. Guedalla, been a great deal mightier. True, he mentions *Nostromo* with approval: but there is some distaste in his "Mr. Tomlinson's richly adjectival tideway"; he complains that Mr. Hudson has made South America one vast bird-sanctuary; and that Mr. Cunninghame Graham has turned it into a circus. But Mr. Guedalla has turned his Argentine into—well, an after-dinner speech.

For his argument, if I do not mistake him, is that we have dined too heavily on travel books; that the literature of South American travel, though extensive, is somewhat indigestible; and that the Englishman, at least, is no more aware of this vast sub-continent than he was when Sir Robert Duddeley came back from Bermuda with tall rumours of a "towne called El Dorado". He proposes to offset this with a book which contains more wit than information, and he is entirely justified.

Mr. Guedalla's wit is one of the most cultivated in Europe. Does it matter very much if he excites our curiosity without satisfying it? Others have tried to satisfy without exciting. Does it matter if he says practically nothing about art, architecture, archaeology, public buildings, private hotels, revolutions, and bad women? Others have said a great deal. Does it matter if, so far as Mr. Guedalla is concerned, these Argentinians are people without faces or features; very dignified in private, very expansive in public; rather childish, entirely courteous, and a trifle funny? Does it matter, after all, if Mr. Guedalla—a British lecturer abroad—is slightly afflicted with the British lecturer's "platform eyesight", which makes him look down on his audience even in retrospect? You cannot criticize this book for what it doesn't say, when what it does say is so extremely entertaining.

Argentine Tango is a book which few travellers could have written—(how pleasant some dreadful *safaris* would have been, how pleasant some dreary Arctic voyages, if there had been more wit in them!). It is improvised, but not ill-constructed: true wit is never untidy. It begins with some general remarks—that Latin America is hardly Latin; that the United States has made the dangerous mistake of condescending to its neighbour republics; that the English—newspapers, suburbs, Prince of Wales, and all—have peacefully occupied Buenos Aires. It goes on to descriptions of the voyage across; of Pernambuco; of the lunatic contours of Rio. Suddenly we are on the International, travelling across the plains to Mendoza, whence

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a pale strip of road reaches up towards the impossible Andes. Then back to Buenos Aires, and the trials of lecturing under camera fire; to the Argentine home and the English "Hurlingham"; to the dictator Uriburu, who has no panther cub in his drawer, and does not ask after Hitler and Moseley; to champion bulls; to the invasion of French culture. The history of South America is brilliant with a strange mythology—here are some fragments of nineteenth-century history, which have all the quality of legend. And so to the luxuries of railway travel, where the "Professor" is provided with a fireplace and a bathroom in his coach. And so home.

This book is precisely what it intends to be—a relief from the dish of fact and the garnish of photograph. One doesn't have to bother about its "importance"—it is meant to be enjoyed. Its wit and grace recall what Burton said, three hundred years ago—that the younger men of his time travelled "'ad jactandum magis quam ad usum reipublicae'—to crack, gaze, see fine sights, spend time. Yet it availeth howsoever".

GEORGE DANGERFIELD

THE STUART PRETENDERS *by Sir Charles Petrie* (HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN. $3.50)

THIS is history written as by a man inspired. True, there is no sensational writing, the tone is moderate, and, though one knows where the author's ultimate sympathies lie, the book is remarkably impartial. Such a detachment, the true historical sense, the idiomatic, interesting, yet restrained style, cannot be too highly praised.

Many re-adjustments have been made recently in historical subjects. Mary Stuart has been re-evaluated and almost rehabilitated. The stock of Victoria is up and that of Cranmer is down. William and Mary are also in for a fall. Sir Charles's book should put the Stuarts, so to speak, back on a business basis, for since the last one of them (Anne) ruled, the pretenders have been under-rated.

Charles II was, of course, the greatest Stuart. Petrie, in his second chapter, shows he knows the true character of Charles and the period:—

> Honesty among politicians and chastity among women are as rare in the books and plays of today as they were in those of the reign of Charles II, but to frame an indictment against the morals of a whole nation is a risky proceeding. The dramatist and the novelist are not, as is too often forgotten, historians concerned with the portrayal of things as they are, but artists, to whom a great deal of licence must of necessity be conceded. Such being the case, it is as absurd to cite Rochester or Wycherley as a witness to the morals of the subjects of Charles II as it would be to invoke the writings of Noel Coward or Michael Arlen as testimony against the behaviour of the subjects of George V.

The chapter on Charles is followed by one of especial discernment, among other judgements, on the weak but difficult personality of James II. That chapter makes very evident the obstacles he had to contend with; it brings into high relief the blunders he, his allies, and his commanders (with the exception of Dundee) made. Then we proceed to Anne, to James III—"Old Mr. Misfortunate"—and the remaining chapters are devoted to the Fifteen, the Forty-Five, Jacobitism underground, and the last Stuarts. The line has almost petered out now, being confined to the offspring, one in number, of Louis of Bavaria, but his descent from Charles II's sister, Henrietta, who married the Duc d'Orléans, is direct. The last Stuart died over a hundred years ago. Sir Charles emphasizes the part that Jacobitism, though dead now, has played in English history, maintaining the flame of

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loyalty to the monarchy. Its spiritual heirs, he concludes, are "to be found among the followers of Mr. Baldwin and among those of Mr. De Valera, among the members of the New Party and among those who throng the *levées* of the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster".

JAMES W. LANE

STUDIES IN SUBLIME FAILURE *by Shane Leslie* (SCRIBNER'S. $3.75)

THIS is not so much character drawing, which one would expect from the title, as condensed biography hastily written to make an unproved point. Shane Leslie apparently felt himself under no obligation to justify the antithetical adjective, though he fully justifies the epithet. To depict the kind of "Grammarian's Funeral" failure which presumably was his intention, would require clearer thinking and cleaner writing than he has chosen to give this book. Trying to extract the individuals from the public incidents of their lives—which is surely the writer's and not the reader's task—is much like trying to pick people out of a crowd with only fireworks for light. And very faulty fireworks these are at times. There is English here that is unforgivable in a man of Mr. Leslie's talents and training.

"When Curzon's draft treaty reached Kabul, the Amir produced his own. In flowery Persian it settled everything as they were."

If that is the Cambridge scholar, why not the California actor-cowboy as standard?

To take the studies in the order of their coming—Cardinal Newman's "glittering legend" suffers further tarnishing at the hands of this supposed protector who declares it might have survived his death but not his biography by Wilfrid Ward. The "ecclesiastical Mrs. Gummidge" of Mr. Ward is not improved by Mr. Leslie's treatment. Again the Cardinal emerges as a rather hysterical figure, acrid, ineffective, constantly at odds with other potentates of the Church. If Mr. Leslie believes that the explanation of Newman's behaviour lies in the fact that he had the easily rasped temperament of the artist, why did he not show the artist in the Cardinal? Neither as churchman nor as writer does Newman appear sublime here.

The study of Parnell is perhaps the worst in the whole book, because here Leslie is treading ground on which his instinct and experience are unreliable guides. When he says that Parnell was the man for whom Ireland had been waiting a quarter-century and whom she has since regretted, he is talking neither sound sense, nor hard fact. When he decorates his narrative with such a sentence as: "Time drifted past in a rush of greyhounds and cricket balls", he is using the kind of metaphor that one associates with the House of Commons in its more muddied moments. What an avalanche would be there! When he says that Parnell was "the last person in history who could lead and leash the Irish as one", he is neither good historian nor sound prophet.

The best study in the book is that of the Marquis Curzon, but why did not Mr. Leslie elaborate on the fact that Curzon had a Jewish grandmother? He had a trump card to play there in the study of a man who could apparently handle a Maharajah and Comrade Krassin with equal ease. What could not Lord Macaulay have done with such material and what might not Mr. Leslie, if he took the trouble? He says of Curzon: "He was a mosaic of several great men rather than a single great one." A high-sounding phrase which confesses the author's failure.

But the real quarrel with Mr. Leslie in this book should be on the subject of More-

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ton Frewen. Here was splendid material which, from every standpoint, Mr. Leslie was competent to handle adequately—and did not.

In these days when so much careless, ignorant, and arrogant writing is pouring off the printing presses, it would seem incumbent on a man of Leslie's tradition and training to show an example of scrupulous respect for his medium. As it is, he is showing a very bad example, and the results should be matter for his artistic conscience.

NORAH MEADE

THE MEMOIRS OF SATAN *by William Gerhardi and Brian Lunn* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.50)

THIS is a very second-rate Satan, quite a come-down from the proud devil who appears so defiantly in Goethe's *Faust* as "der Geist der stets verneint". Gerhardi's and Lunn's Satan is the spirit not so much of negation as of vacillation, an instigator of sin who assists willingly in its commission, particularly when it is the sin of seduction. As such, one feels, he deserves the end he ultimately gets at the hands of the All-Highest. Immortal from the beginning of time, he is reduced shortly after the War to mortal status, and is burned up not by fire from heaven but in the commonplace crematorium at Golders Green. The authors suggest that he may be still living in one or both of them. One hopes that in the case of Mr. Gerhardi at least he will soon be exorcised. Authentic accounts of contemporary futility are decidedly more valuable and entertaining than this pseudo-history seen through the eyes of a sly and spineless evil spirit.

The theme of the book is the mission of Satan to earth as observed on behalf of the All-Highest who has no time to watch the inhabitants of this poor planet and wishes a report on their doings. The story begins with Dodo, ape-wife of Satan who early deserts his rôle of observer to become participant in human affairs. At first Satan walks the earth openly, concealing his hoofs when he chooses as best he can. While acting in the dangerous rôle of referee in the David-Goliath fight, he discovers fortunately that he has a faculty for becoming invisible. All he has to do is press a switch in his body, and lo! he is present but unseen. Thereafter he "simply follows the line of least resistance and allows himself to be drawn into people by sheer force of suction caused by vacuity in nature". He is in Jonah when the latter is swallowed by the whale; in Salomé when she kisses the head of John the Baptist; in Tiberius when he indulges in sadism; in Cromwell when he confronts Charles I; in Marie Antoinette when she mounts the scaffold. Finally he is in Fred, a teacher at Croydon who has befriended him. Fred is hanged for a crime committed while he was "possessed".

All the time Satan is making a film of human history which he eventually induces the All-Highest to watch. The showing takes place in Salisbury, England. When the Creator departs in his airplane, piloted by Peter, He seems non-committal, if not slightly bored, and He makes no comment. But Satan discovers that like the prisoner of Chillon he becomes white in a single night. Suddenly a fumbling old man, he becomes unable to manage his switch, and one day when he disappears into his Bayswater landlady, his feet are left hanging outside.

This Satanic bird's-eye view of human history is neither illuminating nor startling. Maybe the Crusades were simply massacres, and the real trouble with men is that, "when fired with the idea of making mankind one,

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he literally took a gun and fired at the men who were not at one with him". Somehow the idea does not seem novel. The All-Highest was not impressed with Satan's discovery that what mankind needed was less faith and more shame, and we are inclined to agree with the All-Highest. The trouble with this book seems to be that the authors took so much trouble about it. It is too laboured to be funny and too flippant to be worth study. What is commonplace to the thinker and therefore uninteresting, is philosophic history to the "general" and therefore "caviar". Like Queen Victoria, "we are not amused", a novel experience in reading William Gerhardi.

NORAH MEADE

THE CULT OF WEAKNESS *by Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr.* (HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN. $1.50)

HENRY CABOT LODGE needs no introduction to American readers. In this book the Senator's grandson, with no little experience of political journalism already to his credit, considers a major symptom of our present intellectual and political decomposition, the cult of weakness. A temperate and convincing indictment of pacifist errors and follies takes up most of the text, until in the last chapter we are shown the connection of ideas between pacifism and the other false gods of the weakness worshippers—prohibition, bureaucracy, the coddling of criminals, and so on. The rejecting of powerful errors is not often commercially profitable; the writer whose chief object is royalties will usually make more by capitalizing the aforesaid errors. At the same time the job of calling attention to neglected aspects of reality, although usually ungrateful, is necessary public work of the highest importance. Since the reviewer has long believed that the errors castigated in this book have helped make the last century and a half the bloodiest in human history, he submits that the author has deserved well of the Republic.

Mr. Lodge's chief target is the folly of believing that war is a sort of appendix in the social order without organic relation to the other institutions and practices of society. It has been a chief mark of our murderous democratic era that legions of idle dreamers have hoped that armed warfare could be diminished while economic warfare flourished. The author stresses the matter of foreign trade; if a country can live without imports, and if it can live comfortably without large exports, obviously it stands a better chance of remaining at peace than a nation scrambling actively to increase its share of world trade. Since the United States is in precisely this position, our pacifists if intelligent would work for an increasingly self-contained national economy. The fact that they do nothing of the sort merely proves that they have not thought out the problem.

The book would gain in force were its tone less diffident and more assertive; the reviewer would not be understood to say that a school for young writers should write over its door "Abandon modesty all ye who enter here"—in too many cases the advice would be superfluous. Nevertheless he believes with Francis Bacon that boldness, although ". . . a child of ignorance and baseness, far inferior to other parts . . . nevertheless . . . doth fascinate . . . those that are either shallow in judgement or weak in courage, which are the greatest part; . . . therefore we see it hath done wonders in popular states, but with senates and princes less". If a man write at all he must think his own opinion worth having.

There would seem to be a slight confusion in the author's mind as to what might constitute "a change in human nature", and the

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text has a suspicion of ambiguity as to the value of the battleship in naval warfare. It is true that during the late unpleasantness most of the anti-submarine work was done by small craft, but if fear of the British battle fleet had not kept the German ships in their harbours German guns would have made short work of these smaller vessels.

HOFFMAN NICKERSON

AMERICAN FIRST EDITIONS *by Merle Johnson* (R. R. BOWKER COMPANY. $10.00)

BIBLIOGRAPHY and book-collecting have become so essentially a part one of the other that it is hardly necessary to say that lacking the one the other fades into relative obscurity. Neither has room for the dabbler, and both have risen out of the ranks of part-time diversions to professions—or avocations—demanding skill and scientific approach. Thus, in a most useful tool for collectors, Mr. Johnson presents a revised and enlarged version of his *American First Editions*. The errors of the 1929 version have been corrected, and check-lists of forty-two new authors have been added. And we find Mr. Johnson and those who helped him chasing down evidences of printers' errors, of cracked, worn, or blurred type, in order to establish an elusive "point", as in the case of Longfellow's *The Masque of Pandora and Other Poems*, Boston, 1875. In his first book, Mr. Johnson (or rather Vrest Orton, who was credited with the Longfellow compilation) stated that earliest copies had 1876 on the copyright page and that some had the same date on the title-page. In the present revised version, we are told that the first edition is dated 1875 and that the next to the last line of the first page of contents must read "Candenabria" instead of the later "Candenabbia". This point was, so far as I am aware, first established by Richard Curle. Nevertheless, that either Mr. Johnson or Mr. Orton was already hot on the trail may be verified in the May 4, 1929 issue of *The Publishers' Weekly*.

It might have been well to mention that first editions of all books published by Appleton for approximately twenty-five years past must have in parentheses the figure (1) at the bottom of the last page of text, and that subsequent printings are denoted by their numerical equivalent. The publishers themselves are authorities for this information, stating that to the "best of their knowledge it has been their practice for the past twenty-five or thirty years".

But to quibble over a possible mistake or omission is simply out of order when one begins to appreciate the amount of work that has gone into this new *American First Editions*. It indeed surpasses in its scope the immediate requirements of a collectors' guide, for it supplies to the student of literature check-lists of authors who are rarely collected but who have, nevertheless, made their names worthy of remembrance. It is an "indispensable tool" and an "invaluable aid", but it is more than that: it is a workmanlike accomplishment.

B. D. CUTLER

THE LIFE OF RICHARD WAGNER: VOLUME I (1813-1848) *by Ernest Newman* (KNOPF. $5.00)

SINCE almost every year witnesses the publication of further source material, the time is not yet ripe for a definitive life of Wagner. Mr. Ernest Newman, who is a wise man as well as a great musicologist, makes no claim to finality in his new biography. "It is merely an attempt to bring, for the first time, all the available Wagner documents into the one focus, and so to make the way a little

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easier for some better qualified student a few years hence." It is impossible to conceive of a student better qualified for that final adjusting of values than the present biographer. Possibly realizing, however, that the last important documents may be held back for another quarter of a century, Mr. Newman has decided that, with the deaths of Cosima and Siegfried Wagner and the consequent release of new material, a new era in Wagnerian research is in sight.

The first of Mr. Newman's three volumes lies before me—over five hundred pages of Bodoni with lavish footnotes. It covers the years 1813-1848—the years of *Rienzi*, *Der fliegende Holländer*, *Tannhäuser*, and *Lohengrin*, and of the masterly plans for the reorganization of music in Dresden. These were the real *Wanderjahre* of Wagner's life, coloured by the sordidness of Madgeburg and Riga, the first assault on Paris, and the ambiguous, disillusioning years at Dresden. And in 1836 occurred Wagner's fateful marriage with Minna, destined to endure for three intolerable decades.

These, added to the vicissitudes of the student years, furnish the bare outlines of this first period. The chronicle is dismal, yet curiously inspiring. The composer was hunted from town to town by his creditors, and when he fled from Dresden in May, 1849, he owed 20,000 thalers, or approximately $15,000. When it is considered that his salary, as Court Director at Dresden, was a niggardly 1,500 thalers a year, his inveterate borrowing is not difficult to understand. Had Wagner ever wavered in his sublime confidence in himself and his mission, he might have become a respectable man, lived prosaically within his income, and died Court Director at some royal or grand-ducal capital. Instead, full of his great conception of himself as a hero, he levied tribute on his friends (to say nothing of his mere acquaintances) for the Wagner whose appointed task it was to glorify the music of his people.

Speaking by and large, Mr. Newman's task has been mainly a judicial one, and he has completed it judiciously, balancing conflicting pieces of evidence, setting letter against letter, friend against foe. "There can never be too many documents in these matters," he declares, without adding the obvious comment that most Wagner "students" have found the documents far too many. But Mr. Newman is an old hand at *diplomata*, and he knows his Bouvard and Pécuchet. The result is the illumination of a thousand dark places.

And now, a word of supererogation. If Volume One is typical of what is to follow (Volume Two carries the story down to 1864, Three to Wagner's death in 1883), there is no doubt that Mr. Newman has added to the not too bulky shelf of great biography. (His *Wagner As Man and Artist* is there already, and I cannot think of it changed, except in a few trifling details. What book is likely to recapture better the epic qualities of the *Meister* or to point so dramatically the warfare of those very qualities with others so mean as to seem inscrutable in such a lofty soul?) In the passing of years Mr. Newman has come to judge Wagner less harshly, and as the greatness of the artist is understood, the ignoble traits of the man are seen in their right proportion. In other words, the balance, in this critic's hand, weighs the evidence more exquisitely. It is my belief, again with the reservation that the succeeding volumes measure up to the standards set by the first, that Mr. Newman has been definitive in at least one way: he has set, for all times, the spiritual values in the glorious saga of Richard Wagner.

WALLACE BROCKWAY

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MARIE ANTOINETTE *by Katherine Anthony* (KNOPF. $3.00)

IN *Marie Antoinette* Katherine Anthony continues the task she set herself previously in her lives of Queen Elizabeth and the Empress Catherine, the task of giving a woman's interpretation of famous women of history. Miss Anthony's is a praiseworthy endeavour, for both queens and courtesans have in the past usually been tried in the courts of biography by judges of the masculine sex. And in *Queen Elizabeth* in particular Miss Anthony proved both a sympathetic and an upright judge. To state that her *Marie Antoinette* is as admirable a biography would be an exaggeration, though it is pleasantly written, and to a reader able to spend only a few hours it may be recommended. Miss Anthony is not one of the "new" biographers. She does not assume the license of the novelist by creating characters conforming either to a preconceived idea or to the biographer's sense of dramatic fitness. She is always sincere and if she has preconceptions she does not fashion them into a Procrustean bed and stretch her victim upon it. In other words she is neither the slave of a formula, nor is she carried away by the desire to display her own virtuosity. And yet her *Marie Antoinette* seems somehow to miss what might be expected of a biographer of Miss Anthony's capabilities.

The reason for this is not far to seek—the book is too short to be a veritable Life, and neither concentrated enough nor sufficiently purged of extraneous matter, to be a vital character-study. To reach its true effectiveness a Life must include a rather complete picture of the times and of its chief events, and it must contain well-considered character drawing, not only of the protagonist, but of all the principal surrounding figures. After reading it we must know what happened, and as far as possible why it happened; we must know the characters, understand their psychology and their inter-relations. Miss Anthony's *Marie Antoinette* is far too short to accomplish this. On the other hand, she has not apparently aimed to make it solely a character-study, by excluding as much as possible the narrative of events, and concentrating her attention on Marie herself and the chief figures in her fate. We fail for instance really to understand the relations existing between Marie and Louis XVI, with the result that there is an indefiniteness not only in the figure of the King but in that of Marie herself. And this fault extends to most of the other characters; in fact the only figure who really comes to life is Count Fersen, which arouses the suspicion that perhaps he is the one person in whom the author is really interested. Miss Anthony's portrait of Louis is in particular disappointing. His was not a sympathetic nature, and there is no reason why any biographer should particularly like him, but Miss Anthony's dislike is so apparent that she ignores the good that was in him. She characterizes him as a true grandson of Louis XV. Louis XV was one of the most despicable men and one of the worst rulers who ever sat upon a throne; Louis XVI for all his sloth was scarcely that.

GRENVILLE VERNON

BULA MATARI: STANLEY, CONQUEROR OF A CONTINENT by *Jacob Wassermann* (LIVERIGHT. $3.00)

HERR WASSERMANN'S reputation as a novelist is such as to insure an instant hearing for a biographical work from his pen; and in *Bula Matari* (*The Rock-Breaker*), contrary to expectations, he has really written a biography

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of Henry Morton Stanley rather than a novel revolving about the African explorer's life. It is, of course, a biography in which psychological analysis—Herr Wassermann's specialty—plays a large part. But the narrative is genuine narrative, based upon Stanley's journals and letters except for the youthful years when these did not exist.

There is no doubt about Herr Wassermann's genius as a story-teller, and he has told the tale of Stanley well—the early years in an orphanage in Wales, the youthful period in the American South at the time of the Civil War, the finding of Livingstone, the terrific descent of the Lualaba and the Congo, the setting up of the Congo Free State, the expedition for the relief of Emin Pasha, the years of disillusion and retirement in the English countryside that preceded the end. Compared, for instance, to the same author's *Caspar Hauser*, known events play a large rôle in this book, and Herr Wassermann's luxuriant imagination is restricted to explaining why Stanley died a disappointed man.

It is this explanation (so firmly based upon Freudian psychology that there is a whole ridiculous chapter of innuendo devoted to the rôle of the erotic in the white man's life in Africa) with which most readers will quarrel. Herr Wassermann has a theory that Stanley's failure as a human being (no one can question his successes as an explorer) arose from an improper balance between "being and doing", from so great an absorption in activity that "the faculty for such action as is really worth while" was lost. Yet so far as one can judge from the documents which Herr Wassermann quotes, it would be closer to the truth to say that Stanley failed because Stanley's real objective was a success that was merely personal. Thus a "frenzied action" which Wassermann considers "a pure act of self-sacrifice"—Stanley's famous march back through the forest to succour his rear guard —was in reality undertaken for purely personal reasons: Stanley feared, as Wassermann himself admits, that if he did not undertake it he "would make himself ludicrous in the eyes of Europe". On the one hand is Wassermann, stubbornly imposing his theory of "frenzied activity" on Stanley's life story; while on the other is Stanley himself, admitting the much simpler and much more likely thesis that he undertook his tremendous labours because he hoped to "receive recognition at the hands of my fellow creatures who had been more happily born, more fortunately endowed, more honoured by circumstances and fate than I". Herr Wassermann, missing the point entirely, presents Stanley as a questionable Freudian warning against the dangers of over-absorbing activity, when he might better be a text for a sermon against the sin of pride.

In a time when we are treated to a spate of novels turning about the white man's sad decline when he and his womenfolk are transplanted to the Dark Continent, we are perhaps inclined to forget that there are at least a few white men whose characters Africa has tried and found true. While Herr Wassermann's book may not in itself be a very sound reminder, let us hope that it will revive our interest in the truly great men like Livingstone and Sir John Kirk who began life as barehanded as Stanley, but who entered Africa secured by the single weapon which Stanley so notably lacked—the weapon of humility.

MARVIN MCCORD LOWES

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SIX NOVELS: *by Dorothea Brande*

Some Samuel Butler of the future, coming across fragments of D. H. Lawrence's work in the ruins of our civilization and recognizing immediately the authenticity of that irritable talent, will arrive at once at the conclusion, unshakable and hardly needing defense, that these fragments are the work of a woman—a restless, unsatisfied, neurotic feminine genius.

As evidence, if it should be necessary, there will be the careful drawing of heroines as against the hasty, almost embarrassed "slapping in" of the males. Then the care with which these heroines are dressed—how they dress for everyday living, and how they dress for the great dramatic scenes of their lives. Then their homes; Lawrence draws the background of his heroines with an almost finicking attention to *décor*—to furniture, to textures and colours, to place, state, and class of domicile. But most important of all there are the specifications for lovers.

These reflections rise again and again in reading The Lovely Lady (*Viking*. $2.00), Lawrence's posthumous stories. So far from being the uneven, haphazard compilation of the shards and scraps of a genius's work, this book is Lawrence very near his best. The story form was obviously becoming easier for him to use as he matured. The diffuse verbosity which mars all his novels and many of his earlier stories is here disciplined, occasionally almost to terseness. His sense of situation, always good, is now acute; there is less wandering and musing in his approach, less inconclusiveness and moralizing after his bolt is shot than in his earlier stories.

The Lovely Lady comprises seven tales, true diversity in true unity. Of them all only one seems to me trivial on its third reading: I cannot see impressiveness in the awkward humour of *Rawdon's Roof*. At the other extreme of significance is *Things*—that tale of a yearning American couple turning away from their own culture, gathering bits of other cultures here and there (most excellently symbolized by "things"—Venetian curtains, a Renaissance desk), only to be forced back to America at last, where their battered and incongruous gleanings from Europe sit unhappily within the walls of an American home—is, if not D. H. Lawrence's masterpiece, a masterpiece nevertheless. The other stories are one and all fodder for the future Butler.

Lawrence's femininity shows most plainly in his almost megalomaniac belief in the power and dangerousness of women, and in his recurring specifications for fit lovers to mate with his heroines. The most commonplace of civilized women is not to be satisfied, not to be matched, except with a transcendent Maleness, a man of either subtle or gross sensuality such as her civilized masculine companion-piece can never hope to become. Incessantly Lawrence returned to this notion: woman after woman in his writing has taken first a lover or husband from her own state of life only to ruin him, suck him dry and discard him. Then she has come upon her true mate, the proud, vital, and savage male who dominates her.

At some one of Lawrence's repetitions of this theme (for me in re-reading *Aaron's*

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Rod) one realizes with a shock that D. H. Lawrence and E. M. Hull have much in common. The fine-drawn, over-civilized heroines of both these writers demand barbarity, incomprehensibility, and cruelty before the swoon of satisfaction can be reached. These Armenian rug-merchants, these Italian peasants, these gardeners to Lord Chatterley —what are they but so many sheiks for the upper intellectual classes? The maid shivering over the pages of *The Sheik* in the kitchen and the mistress above stairs shivering over *Lady Chatterley's Lover* are gratifying the same desire. The two writers, so widely divergent in talent, in sensibility, and in audience, have had the same revelation, have given their individual accounts of the same gospel, and between them they have spoken to very nearly the entire Anglo-Saxon world. A disquieting thought.

THERE was a great line that put in at Sung-Woo, in Northern China, so that its world-tourists might see the town by charabanc. On that same night a revolution broke out. Four men became separated from their comrades, and when they had reached their ship's dock again the steamer was far down the horizon. The Oxford don, the retired Navy man, the commercial traveller, and the Austrian journalist stood in darkness on the dock till a launch flashed up, took them aboard, and transported them to a great yacht, the "Southern Star".

Mr. John Connell, a new writer, has opened his WHO GOES SAILING? (*Little, Brown*. $2.00) with this situation. The master and owner of the yacht gives them hospitality as well as safety. He makes them happier than they have ever been able to be in their distracted, harassed, post-War lives. Presently, one by one, each tells his life's story. But before the commercial traveller has begun his tale the reader has seen what Mr. Connell has set out to do, and is in a position not only to enjoy the book as a good novel, but to watch the development of his quietly underlying idea. The captain is a kindly Charon, the South Pacific ocean is his Styx; trustfully and happily all four men watch him set his yacht in the direction of an iceberg.

These four men were good men. They had worked hard and well, with devotion as well as industry. All they had asked for happiness was a society in which they could do the best of which they were capable, and this was the one demand their world could not meet. The travelling man had left his inherited and carefully fostered business to go to war, and the War had ruined him. The naval man came of a line of men devoted to the sea and the Crown. The Navy's life had been sapped, the Commander's son lost his place in the succession and went into a clerkship, his talents and aptitude wasted. The Austrian journalist had had a wife, but she had starved to death after the War. Not even the Oxford don was allowed to make his unique contribution to his times. Good honest men, wasted. By good fortune they were allowed to sail toward an iceberg together.

This simple story Mr. Connell manages to tell with great effect, for he is both indignant and pitiful. At times he reaches detachment through a kind of excess of indignation and pity; at others he descends—but very rarely —through the same emotions into sentimentality. These infrequent lapses only serve to throw the unusual excellence of writing and tone into greater relief, and to redeem the book from what might have seemed an inhuman washing of the hands so far as our present muddled times are concerned.

Who Goes Sailing? has a number of the

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qualities which made *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* so popular. Its virtues are sturdier, its preciousness less troublesome. I expect to like later novels better than this book of Mr. Connell's youth, but it was a rare pleasure to read.

ANY review of a book by Elizabeth Bowen bears the same relation to the novel that gossip about a living situation bears to the situation itself. TO THE NORTH (*Knopf*. $2.50) is about a young widow and her sister-in-law, their relation to each other and to an egotist whom the widowed Cecilia has picked up out of idleness and brought casually into their home. This digest is laughable; but then Miss Bowen should go down in literary history as the reviewer's despair. That she is also this reviewer's delight makes the task of recommending her latest book so much the harder. The pleasure of reading her is almost incommunicable, since it never arises from such easily catalogued matters as plots, characters, or humour, but from the way in which her situations (usually of deceptive simplicity) shift, alter, intensify, or melt away precisely as do situations in real life.

Cecilia Summers, her young widow, lost her husband after a bare year of marriage. Outwardly she is lovely, wistful, charming, and a pretty flirt. Little by little her author makes plain to you the reasons for Cecilia's casual man-snatching: the inexplicable loss of her husband at the very moment life looked so straightforward and plain to her has left her deeply distrustful. She must reassure herself by any means, but she is incapable of being reassured. She is wavering, tentative and, as she herself sees, even a little vulgar, since she exploits the emotion she arouses without regard for its obligations. Too clear-sighted not to realize her own superficiality, she is still unable to deny herself that comfort.

Returning from one of her restless flights away from London, she acquires a young man on a train journey. Markie is of no importance to her, nor she to him. He is essentially an egotist, she an egotist through shock. They do not, as a matter of fact, particularly like each other, but they were the two most personable young people on the train. Each estimates the other with casual accuracy; if a meddling fate had not stepped in, they would have drifted apart again as painlessly as they had come together. But Markie must observe the course of such *passades*: he comes gracefully to what both of them recognize as the farewell tea—and meets Emmeline.

Emmeline is the sister of the man Cecilia lost so suddenly. She is the reticent and fastidious woman whom Miss Bowen draws again and again, one of a sisterhood of yet entirely individual characters. How she descends from her aloofness for love of Markie, how she is almost fortuitously devastated and crazed by him, make Miss Bowen's novel. *To the North* moves a little more slowly than *Friends and Relations* or *The Hotel*; perhaps, since one realizes almost immediately that the book is moving toward disaster, rather too slowly. And as usual Miss Bowen harrows her reader as much by laughter as by dread; the tragic humour of the Irish is on every page she writes, that devastating recognition of the incongruous. I never lay one book by Miss Bowen aside without finding myself already impatient for the next.

IN HÉLÈNE ELIAT the French have a serious contender for the honours which have hitherto gone to Colette almost without dispute. SHE WOULD AND SHE WOULDN'T (*Viking*. $2.00) is an extremely subtle and engrossing dissection of the mind and emotions of a very young girl married to an international adventurer years her senior. The girl is a

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delicately morbid creature, needing love but unable to accept it, going toward love and retreating, trying to die and failing at that, to land at last in an emotional limbo of soft indecision.

The book is of inconclusiveness all compact. Susanne von Kalgk was warped in childhood by living with parents who were incompatible, and, picking up the lesson of changing colour and character in her attempts to get tenderness from both father and mother, she goes on through her life presenting whatever aspect of herself will be most charming to the companion of the moment: she is by turns her father's weak and confiding daughter, her mother's fellow conspirator, her husband's pampered child-wife, her lover's gay comrade. In Germany she is German; in Paris she is taken for a Frenchwoman. The very material of the story would have made the book maddening if it had not been thoroughly understood by the author, but the brilliant clarity with which Hélène Eliat sees her creature's dilemma makes this one of the most satisfactory novels which have come to us from France in recent years. Susanne is the only wraith; the other characters are distinctly solid, presented with humour, malice, and sympathy against a clear, bright scene which for the most part is laid in that world-within-a-world of the foreigner in Paris.

In Colette's books a French sun rises and sets on French soil; Mlle Eliat is ostensibly more cosmopolitan, though she and her characters agree that the French have inherited the earth. Her use of other races and landscapes gives *She Would and She Wouldn't* a panoramic effect quite absent from Colette's novels, an effect at once fresh and worldly. But the candid tenderness with which both the older writer and the younger present their heroines for the reader's consideration is so nearly identical that those who followed the fortunes of Colette's Claudine and Renée with interest should take care not to overlook Hélène Eliat's Susanne.

SUBLUNARY, by L. E. Martin (*Dutton.* $2.50), is a first novel which starts off so well, skimming along from the first page with what seems a certain and intended aim, that the disappointment of finding the second half of the book vague and tentative comes very near to being resentful.

Guy Tyndale, after a neurotic boyhood and youth, embraces Anglicanism and takes orders. So far from being helped by his "conversion" he goes on undeviatingly toward insanity, a sadist and hypocrite. This hero, so well drawn that he exercises a horrid fascination on the reader, marries a good simple girl from a shop, the only daughter of a widow. Too simple and humble to accept her own first recoil as a warning that Guy is sinister and unhealthy, proud to be asked in marriage by a scholarly clergyman, Ellen first struggles to understand her erratic lover, abandons the attempt as beyond her, accepts him and bears a child. Guy, his neurosis exacerbated by Ellen's maternity, pursues her, turns upon her, very nearly kills her. After the birth of a half-witted girl Guy is dimissed from the novel to be killed in the War.

But unfortunately Guy, loathsome as he was, was the axis of the book. Ellen, who was well done in relation to her mad husband, becomes a vague creature of no discernible character. The love story of Guy's son with a high-spirited girl who refuses to hold him when she discovers that he is a born wanderer, the misadventures of feeble-minded Jenny, the reappearance of the high-spirited girl with an infant grand-daughter to brighten Ellen's age—none of these odds

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and ends has anything like the unity and interest of the character study of Guy on which the first half of the novel turned so triumphantly. The effect on the reader is rather bewilderingly that of having found two books bound in one cover—an excellent short novel, and several unsatisfactory stories about the novel's secondary characters.

Sublunary is worth reading for the first half alone; only "Francis Iles's" ghastly examination of neurotics has been anything like so deft and probable in recent fiction.

AGAIN, Isabel Wilder's MOTHER AND FOUR (Coward-McCann. $2.50) starts off with ease and speed, only to waver in the end. This story of a young widow who turns her life back into her children's lives, living for them and through them and forgoing her own opportunity to marry a second time, has so much the air of being a personal document that any speculation as to the probable reason for the weakness of the ending would sound impertinent. Nevertheless I offer my guess: imagination seemed unable to complete the work which originated in memory. This leaves a great deal which is still admirably, although rather humourlessly, done. The life of those innumerable places in this country which go by the name of "college towns" is drawn with fidelity; the widely diverse temperaments of the children of a single family is as mysterious here as it is all over the world. Her publisher tells us that Miss Wilder has another book in preparation; it will probably be far more revelatory of the real quality of her talent than *Mother and Four*.

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KEEPING UP WITH THE NOVELISTS

ERIE WATER *by Walter D. Edmonds* (LITTLE, BROWN. $2.50)

ON AN April morning in 1817 Jerry Fowler was crossing the Hudson into Albany. He was going west with ninety dollars in his pocket, fifty of which he planned to use for a down-payment on fifty acres of land in the Western New York Holland Purchase. But he was twenty-two and he saw a girl with coppery hair standing on the deck of a passing boat. She was a "redemptioner" whose passage money had to be paid before the captain would release her. Later that same day Jerry returned to the dock and bought her services for two years and it cost him seventy dollars. And so he took Mary Goodhill west with him although he no longer had enough money to buy a farm and would in no case hold her to the articles of her service. Their ensuing romance becomes somewhat tangled with the building of the Erie Canal and the author goes deeply into both.

Even before they left Albany Jerry had heard rumours that the Canal was to be constructed. Arrived at Utica, he was hired by one Caleb Hammill, a contractor whose bids for some canal locks had just been accepted. From then on the great ditch, nearly four hundred miles of it, a prism forty feet wide at the top, four feet deep, and twenty-eight feet wide at the bottom, is the true subject of the book. There are vast swamps and hills to be dug through, aqueducts and locks to be built, and labourers to be got. Local men were almost useless for digging through some of the worst swamps; the ague and fevers got them. It was found that black men could stand the work better, but in winter it was too cold for them. So Irish "bog-trotters", violent, strange, singing men, came in and were best of all. There is rough-and-tumble fighting in the style of the day, which included gouging and a liberal use of knee and nailed boot. Cosmo Turbe, an active little man, O'Mory, the black-bearded Irish hero, and Jay-Jay, the Negro fighter, make demonstrations. Over the turnpikes rumble the big Pennsylvania wagons, their bells tinkling day and night. Soon they will be no more, superseded by the marvellous new Canal on which a single boat will carry the loads of thirty wagons. Ohio farmers' wheat will sell at a much greater profit; Eastern shippers will send goods more cheaply westward; and here and there lonely couples, pioneering farms far from towns and neighbours, find themselves facing the canal world in their front yards, and shed tears of joy. The Canal is building for seven years, a stupendous undertaking for that time, and finally Erie water flows eastward, the cannons boom from Buffalo to Albany, ceremonies take place, and the men who have done the heavy digging wonder what the canal is for anyway, wonder where they will find more work now that this is done.

One need hardly say more than that this is as good an historical novel as was Mr. Edmonds's first, *Rome Haul*. It is full of accurate detail and incidents recreated with all the stress and drama of the moment. The conversations, the expletives, in fact, the com-

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plete scene of that period and region are utilized with a mastery which points to the author's special study and love of his subject. The romance with which he flavours his story has not the virtue of originality, but its sincere emotion and suspense adequately serve the purposes of narrative interest. If it adds little to the book's merit, at least it does not detract. And certainly it should add thousands to the sale, for the young Fowler couple make a powerful, if sentimental, appeal.

ARCHER WINSTEN

HARDY PERENNIAL *by Helen Hull* (COWARD-MCCANN. $2.50)

MISS HULL'S *Hardy Perennial* is similar in theme to Sir James Barrie's *What Every Woman Knows*. It is about a family in which the woman, married to a pompous egotistical fool of a husband, has to do all the managing and supply all the admiration. It isn't nearly so humorous as Barrie's play. In fact, it isn't humorous at all. And whereas Barrie gave us an object lesson on the modest usefulness of a wise and devoted woman, Miss Hull has pressed the argument for her sex so far that the present reviewer is left somewhat inarticulately to blush for the negligibility of the male. It seems fair, however, to assume that Miss Hull did not write with the primary purpose of discomfiting male readers or of vindicating a sex which, so far as one can make out, has never required vindication. The difference between Barrie's Maggie Shand and Miss Hull's Cornelia Prescott is chiefly a difference of age and environment. Cornelia has three grown children to share with her husband her somewhat overtaxed store of maternal emotion. She has already gone through the phase covered in Barrie's play of helping her husband to a successful career. She has borne him three children, nursed one of them through a long illness, learned to suffer with some patience her husband's inveterate truancy. As the problem of her husband's career appears to be solved, she has gradually ceased to be a buffer between him and the world and become, instead, a buffer between him and his children. She is not as purely maternal as Maggie Shand; she has yearnings which the purely maternal life does not altogether satisfy; but, when offered the boon of a fine and unselfish devotion, she realizes that the maternal feeling comes first and that anything bought at a sacrifice of that feeling will have been bought too dearly.

Here, then, is another earth mother, a Ceres or a modern madonna. At the crisis of Barrie's play someone asks Maggie Shand, with reference to her husband: "Does he deserve to be saved after the way he has treated you?" Maggie's answer is merely: "You stupid David! What has that to do with it?" Miss Hull's heroine has this same peculiarly feminine largeness, this protectiveness towards all life. Perhaps we are wrong in thinking that women can ever descend from the pedestal on which they have been placed by their closer approximation than men's to mere biological self-sufficiency. However that may be, one is certain to be impressed by the spectacle of this woman moving with her large simple instincts through a world that masculine mismanagement has brought to the ultimate brink of destruction. The aspect of life is much altered since Barrie wrote *What Every Woman Knows*, and the conflict between feminine realism and masculine ineptitude has become even more pronounced. Probably the scene in *Hardy Perennial* that expresses this contrast most completely is the one in which Mrs. Prescott is berated by her husband for having failed to attend a big public funeral. A philanthropic

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leader has died, the head of a big public welfare and investigatory organization like the Rockefeller Foundation, to whose post Horace Prescott has hopes that he may succeed. Just before the funeral Cornelia takes her son's little dog out for a walk in the park. He get into a fight and is badly injured by a dog much larger than himself.

"But he is so small," Cornelia protests afterwards, when obliged to defend herself, "and was covered with blood. I couldn't leave him. Not even for that funeral."

The incident gives us in brief the whole case of the great impersonal organized philanthropy versus visceral warmth and natural spontaneous fostering love and affection, in which women so clearly excel. Cornelia, standing alone with her feminine amplitude and directness and deep-rooted primary power is a welcome portent in the welter of modern chaos, faced with which, as was earlier remarked, a mere masculine reviewer is constrained inarticulately and, one hopes, salutarily, to blush.

ROBERTS TAPLEY

THE KNIFE OF THE TIMES *by William Carlos Williams* (DRAGON PRESS. $1.50)

THE KNIFE OF THE TIMES is a collection of informal short stories by Dr. William Carlos Williams, poet and recipient of the Dial Award in 1926. It is a fragmentary portrait of the civilization immediately surrounding the author. The stories are for the most part strictly contemporary, and are recorded in the contemporary and local idiom. They deal with middle-class housewives, eccentric old women, drunks, bums, prostitutes, Negro servant-girls, doctors, nurses. There are no plots, but several life histories are set forth by means of scattered anecdote. They are all gossip, a physician's gossip, and for the most part very interesting. The indiscriminate curiosity which inspires them—"O strong ridged and deeply hollowed nose of mine," exclaimed Dr. Williams in *Al Que Quiere,* "what will you not be smelling?"—must be considered their most characteristic quality and probably gives them their greatest value. But not all of them are of equal value, and it takes something besides an indiscriminate curiosity to write a good story.

The best of the lot is *Old Doc Rivers,* placed last in the book. It is also the longest, and its length is doubtless one of the reasons for its excellence. The manner is exactly that of the other tales, anecdotal, the anecdotes and bits of information being arranged thematically as the author's interest plays about the figure of the man. There is a great deal of information, swiftly and colloquially expressed, and the man and the scene emerge life-size, complete.

Old Doc Rivers began his practice in the days of horses. "Horses. These definitely should be taken into consideration in estimating Rivers' position, along with the bad roads, the difficult means of communication of those times." His first patients were liverymen, coachmen, bartenders, a vanished race since 1908. He was resourceful, various, highly gifted, dramatic, princely in his services to the poor, and his patients, mostly the poor, adored him. But he doped, and made no secret of it. This should have been enough, it would seem, to finish him as a physician, but through some curious and inevitably natural mutation, as the more respectable part of the population turned thumbs down on him, the poor, the desperate, the dying turned to him in their ignorance and distress and made of him a legend of infallibility. He passed through a period of dreadful blunders, not without brutality, yet mixed with uncanny triumphs, and arrived finally

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at the day when we last see him, riding out in one of his two fine cars with the blue pomeranians which his wife bred for her amusement, an old man, a wreck, but prosperous and still practising. He is a prime character, and Dr. Williams has done a prime portrait of him.

The next best thing in the book is *Mind and Body*, another discursive portrait of a fine individual. After this, *Pink and Blue, The Buffaloes, The Colored Girls of Passenack,* and *A Descendant of Kings* are interesting; the remaining stories I found pretty dull. None are quite so inconclusive, so nearly nothing more than clinical jottings on a diseased society as Dr. Williams's latest contributions to *Contact*, but they are of the same order. And although the manner is the same as in *Old Doc Rivers* and *Mind and Body*, there is neither the vigour nor the alertness of writing which makes those two so admirable. The colloquialism is soggy. "A splendid voice, goodlooking and a hard worker,—the only thing was he liked the hard cider." Or, "She, of course, kept him well in hand. He was a great companion, but she kept well on her guard. They laughed, talked, and then took in the races. That was the best. They were great races, in fact. During the afternoon a world's record for two-year-olds in harness on a mile track was established so that Bess felt it had been a great day".

There is nothing in the book to approach the magnificent *Destruction of Tenochtitlan* from *In the American Grain*—"Upon the orchidean beauty of the new world the old rushed inevitably to revenge itself after the Italian's return"—and nothing to approach the agility and fine prose of that extremely discursive book, *The Great American Novel.* There is instead an apparently deliberate destruction of those earlier styles. And I rather think that the novel, *White Mule,* now running in *Pagany*, is both better written and better planned. Certainly some very beautiful and very amusing passages have already been published from it. Nevertheless, I wish to repeat that *Old Doc Rivers* is a prime piece of work.

JANET LEWIS

SAUNDERS OAK *by Robert Raynolds* (HARPERS. $2.50)

A PAUCITY of intellectual content, a superabundance of lush description of nature, carelessness in the establishment of reality, and an extreme over-use of simile which is annoying and sometimes ridiculous, characterize this latest novel by Robert Raynolds whose *Brothers in the West* won the Harper Novel Prize of last year.

The story is of Ed Saunders who returns to his New England farm after twenty years of wandering about the world. The first person he meets on the road is Edith Gaines, the daughter of the woman who had refused him. Edith is a poetess and Ed is a man of unusual experience and insight. That is undoubtedly why they waste no time in coming to understand each other. By page fourteen Ed has confided in Edith that he has been in prison and may be followed to his home by an "unfortunate woman" named Opal, whom he has lived with, and Edith has told him that the dominating passion of her life is to be complete and ordered within herself.

Edith's relations with her family are peculiar. Lavinia, Ed's old sweetheart, is resentful of her daughter's inward preoccupation and jealous of her husband's affection for Edith. Henry Gaines loves his daughter in a way which may be described as vaguely incestuous. The arrival of Ed intensifies these

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relations, for when he and Edith are drawn together, Lavinia is doubly jealous of her daughter, while Henry sees his only interest in life slipping away from him.

Then, as Ed had feared, his past follows him. Opal, her half-wit son, and the boy's father, a sneakthief, come to live at Saunders' place. The story becomes the struggle of the three women for Ed and develops in a welter of emotion and spiritual struggle.

For all the flavour of locale which Mr. Raynolds has put into *Saunders Oak* the action might have taken place in the South; although the characters talk about New England they are not of it. They are idealizations from the glowing imagination of the author who is so passionately in love with humanity and nature that his every sentence is a poem of praise to them. Henry Gaines, for instance, expresses himself curiously for a New England grocer. In a casual moment of tenderness he remarks to Edith, "I'm your father". Another time, explaining how he had fallen to sleep, he says, "Someone poured lead over me to fasten me down".

And in these pages Nature, meaning external nature, is so constantly referred to as to be distracting: the characters always seem to be getting mixed up with the landscape. A man cannot make a simple movement without having it reported as in this sentence: "Ed sat down on an old stump, putting the blade of his axe in a pool of sunlight." The smothering of the narrative is completed by Mr. Raynolds's zest for similes, for not only does he employ them on every possible (and sometimes impossible) occasion, but he strains them to the point of declaring a knocking at a door "as compelling as the first chords of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony".

All of this is not only Romanticism, but to my mind it is pretty bad Romanticism.

JOHN BRONSON

MADAME MAILLART *by Claude Aveline* (DUTTON. $2.35)

IN recommending this novel André Maurois has said: "The milieu is that painted by Thomas Mann in *The Magic Mountain*, but the tone is quite different. Claude Aveline possesses a very well-balanced sense of chastity." This slight praise strikes at the fundamental weakness of *Madame Maillart*. Its virtues are negative.

Phillipe Denis, an aspiring young writer of nineteen, is the protagonist. Wishing to take a vacation from his studies and at the same time to see a little of the world without parental surveillance, he convinces his bourgeois family that he is in danger of contracting tuberculosis and goes to spend a few months in a Swiss sanatorium. Here he meets Mme Maillart, a once famous beauty who sequesters herself in half-lit rooms and wears a veil to hide both the marks of time and a slight squint. Mme Maillart is desired by not a few of the inhabitants of Chevrières, hated by two of the patients and an object of speculation to all. Intrigued by Phillipe's youth, sensitivity and intelligence, she attempts to seduce him and fails, for he has fallen in love with Mlle Madeleine de Charmes, a pure and lovely young consumptive who has had a lonely, sad childhood.

But in the sanatorium Phillipe passes as Mme Maillart's lover and the envious hatch plots against him. Mme Maillart, on her side understanding the purity of the love of Phillipe and Madeleine, lays a Machiavellian snare to soil it. All of these plots, reminiscent of Gide, fail; and young love runs its unhappy course to the separation imposed by both families.

It is unfortunate that M. Aveline laid the scene of this romance in the peculiar atmosphere of a Swiss sanatorium where its super-

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ficiality is immediately revealed by automatic comparison with *The Magic Mountain*, especially so since nothing in *Madame Maillart* necessitates such a setting. However, it would take more than another locale to rescue this story from banality.

Its morality is similar to that of *Grand Hotel* but the author has not created in his characters the reality and force of desire necessary to the full exposition of such a scheme. And, autobiographical in that Philippe Denis is a writer, it is certainly fictitious in its plot. The result is that the book is neither flesh nor fowl. Restraint and clarity in style and treatment make it readable but it lacks the qualities indispensable to a first novel, either strong conviction or originality.

JOHN BRONSON

LET THE HURRICANE ROAR *by Rose Wilder Lane* (LONGMANS, GREEN. $1.50)

STORIES of western pioneers have often been shambling affairs in which the fruits of research, a traditional idea of the pioneer man and woman, satire, poetry, and a comfortably retrospective attitude have all been mingled. Grandfathers have dodged bullets down by an old town saloon whose actual existence the author can prove; grandmothers, carefully attired by their creators in leg-o'-mutton sleeves, have introduced Waldorf salads into their particular Pawhuskas, all showing vaguely that time rolled on out on the prairies.

Let the Hurricane Roar lacks the research, satire, and retrospective quality, but has the poetry. It is so natural, direct, and simple that it might have been lifted from a day-to-day journal of the period it covers. It is the story of Charles and Caroline, who go out to Dakota and live on a claim; five years and the land is theirs. The lonely newness is an adventure to them: the sod shanty in which they live; the Swedish neighbours whom they befriend; their new baby; and finally the wheat—great green shoots of it, growing almost visibly in the blistering heat of the summer prairie.

> Let the hurricane roar!
> It will the sooner be o'er!
> We'll weather the blast, and land at last
> On Canaan's happy shore!

sings Charles to the accompaniment of the violin he has brought from back home. Their "hurricane" is a grasshopper plague; the description of it and its tragic consequences is breath-taking. The wheat is completely destroyed. The dream of the white house the wheat was to buy—a white house with nice things for the baby—floats away and Charles finds it necessary to return to the town to work for the fall and winter. Spring is to bring him back with $40 saved for a new start.

Caroline remains on the claim for the winter with no living person nearer than ten miles. She *must* keep the land for Charles and the baby. Miss Ferber's Yancey Cravat became a model for a memorial figure to the pioneer, but Caroline's struggle against the winter to keep herself and the child alive transcends the limitations of civic sculpture. It is the story of an individual's triumph over unsympathetic Nature, told in a simple prose whose adequacy assures Caroline of a finer fame than does municipal marble.

Miss Lane's unwavering objectivity in telling her story is responsible for its vividness. A respect for the unities of time, place, and action also helps. This is not the history of a whole district over a long period. It is simply Charles and Caroline and their struggling start on the prairie. To a sufficiently rich and

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moving experience Miss Lane has added form, and as a result her novel does not merely shamble on. In addition, a succession of memorable pictures rises out of the book: Mrs. Svenson, the Swedish neighbour who cannot speak English, showing Caroline her wedding dress and Swedish Bible; Caroline reading Tennyson's poetry (their only book besides a Bible) to Charles on Sundays; and one larger picture, underlying all the rest, of two people on the prairie and under the great sky intent upon a home in the "West with its outpouring abundance of joy, of freedom".

KATHARINE SHATTUCK

AWAKE *by Susan Prior* (BALLOU. $1.50)

THE publication of *Awake* introduces a new writer of charming prose and a delicate talent for portraiture. It is the portrait of a young English girl rather excessively in love with a young American—by which I mean that her feelings are rather in excess of the circumstance and very much in excess of the response by the American; but that is no doubt the way with young girls. The introspective progress of her emotions and their disappointment completes the portrait. The background is a pleasant vicarage in an agreeable English countryside. Into this John the American hardly fits. Nothing much goes wrong, of course, and there is no particular *contretemps* except once when John spat while walking with her (and what was worse, defended the spitting). But little things, like his plus-fours (too bright) and his taste for Edna St. Vincent Millay (too sentimental) and his view of life (too positive) give away the fatal fact that he is not English. What is much more fatal, however, is the fact that John is not at all in love with her, perhaps will never be in love with anyone but himself. With this revelation, pride and determination collapse and the girl (whose name, I think, is not mentioned in the book), after much poetry and self-pity, goes back to potatoes without bothering any more about her figure. The pages in which she pilfers from the ice-box are quite delicious.

Awake could hardly have escaped the influence of Rosamond Lehmann, but the talent, if slight, is authentic and will develop. The girl is something of a prig and sometimes a rather tiresome anthology of quotations, and she is very naïve in her judgments of herself and her American; but Miss Prior saves her with a spice of humour and a charming style, and ends by making a most attractive book of her.

P. M. JACK

YE DRUNKEN DAMOZEL *by Simon Jesty* (SMITH & HAAS. $2.00)

YE DRUNKEN DAMOZEL, the name of a Poplar public-house, is an early notification of the fantastic and mostly fake style with which Mr. Jesty decorates his story. Jonah is born into the novel with the hullabaloo of Tristram Shandy, gilded and refined. His father, "bluff and stern like a weather-beaten figurehead . . . empties a stoup of Hollands . . . with his deep-sea hearties"—as deep-sea hearties have done in many novels from Smollett to Dickens. His mother babbles of Tarshish and Nineveh and Helen of Tyre and Jahveh and Aphrodite. Mr. Jesty means that she is very religious and very sensual, and that her visions get the better of her. Jonah makes love to little Marion ("slim-legged Helen") of the public-house, to the accompaniment of the pipes of Pan, Dionysian revels, and other paraphernalia commonly used by Jack and Norman Lindsay. In no time Marion has

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become a Zuleika Dobson (they are all implicated) playing Chopin—which is "the very dialect of the gods"—admired, adored, and followed from Poplar to Rio by Mazzendean who is a crooked politician, and Harrison who is "an anarchist below zero" with a "refrigerated brain", and Jonah. In Rio she has already been rescued by a wealthy and tactful Señor with a wicked nephew. The Señor dies, the nephew is killed, Mazzendean and Harrison withdraw with a *beau geste*, and our Lady of the Green Hat (as she would be now) is free to marry Jonah and run off on their first night at home—something to do with Pan.

Or so one understands with some difficulty from Mr. Jesty's playful use of language. It is a playfulness that is a little hard for the reader to live up to, as when Jonah smokes a cigar and (I quote precisely) "frivols with one of the fragrant vegetable cylinders".

P. M. JACK

THE BOAT OF LONGING *by O. E. Rölvaag* (HARPERS. $2.50)

O. E. RÖLVAAG, late Professor of Norwegian Literature at St. Olaf College in Minnesota, and several times mentioned for the Nobel Prize, first sprang into fame in 1927, when *Giants in the Earth*, the first volume of his trilogy on Norwegian-American pioneering life, was brought out in this country. He had written the book in Norwegian in 1923—his third novel. The phenomenal success of *Giants in the Earth* (it sold nearly a quarter of a million copies in this country) and the two novels which completed the trilogy—*Peder Victorious* and *Their Fathers' God*—naturally aroused interest in Rölvaag's two earlier books. The first of them, *Pure Gold*, was published in English in 1930. The second is the present volume, written in 1921 and the last of the Rölvaag books to remain untranslated.

Since *The Boat of Longing* is the first but one of Rölvaag's novels, the fact that it seems autobiographical is not surprising. Rölvaag was born in the same Arctic part of the old country as his hero, Nils Vaag, and like Nils lived there as a simple fisherman before emigrating to America. Moreover, the author radiates exactly the same love of virtue that is so prominent in Nils, and the reader feels sure that while Rölvaag may not have drawn literally upon his own life for the experiences of his character, he is most certainly identified with Nils in spirit.

It is rather difficult to judge *The Boat of Longing* critically; so many of its themes have just got under way when the book comes to an end. After closely following every step of his career from birth we are abruptly forced to take leave of Nils in the Great Northern Station at Minneapolis, with the bare assertion that he is going to a new job that will occupy him for the next two years. The scene then changes to Norway; we witness the amusing, pathetic, curtailed visit of Nils's father to New York; and the story ends with the old man, back in the old country, rowing out to sea, under the spell of a mystic illusion, never to be seen again.

The Boat of Longing is most interesting for certain fragmentary incidents, such as the free meal obtained for Nils by a prostitute whom his innocence finally daunts. Rölvaag in this book seems willing to sacrifice the solid construction of a whole to the capricious insertion of vivid narrative snatches. All of these snatches are coloured by an emotion peculiarly Scandinavian (and decidedly exotic to us of the temperate zone); and some of them are excellent. As a piece of literature *The Boat of Longing* is noteworthy for its combination of two widely dissimilar

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strains, the mystical folktale and the realistic novel. On one page we read of an ecstatic vision followed by a mysterious disappearance; on the next, of a confidence game in a Y. M. C. A. Strangely enough, it is in the latter vein that Rölvaag is most authentic. When he writes in the manner of the old legends he is transparently the professor; it is too literary to grip us. But when he sets down simply the adventures of his hero in the New World he makes a real contribution. What is more, it is then that he is most Scandinavian, for the blood of the ancient Norsemen seems to prefer to show itself, not in romantic imitation of the sagas, but in the humdrum and commonplace of a Minneapolis alley.

GERALD SYKES

BLACK CABIN *by Green Peyton* (LITTLE, BROWN. $2.00)

JULIAN BEAUCHAMP RIVES was eighteen years old and he lived with his Uncle James, a remote old gentleman who spoke rarely and then with many pauses, in a decaying house in Charlottesville, where Julian attended the University of Virginia. Julian, like most dreamy youths, was discontented with the uneventfulness of his life, but lacking will or initiative he did nothing about it. For three years he had been in love with Marty Bryan, who was three years his elder, vague and "mystical" in her own way but with rather more definite ideas of what she wanted than Julian. He was disturbed, though not unduly so, that their physical intimacy had never been carried very far. Marty lived with her mother on one of those dilapidated and rambling estates to be encountered in novels of the South, and it was on a visit to Maurbry that Julian met Marty's cousin Ann and on the first night of their meeting slept with her—at her instigation, for Ann was a decided person, knowing what she wanted and going after it. When Marty learned of Julian's infidelity, she would have nothing more to do with him, and his affair with Ann progressed until they were married—as a result of Ann's false statement that she was going to have a child. Ann's neurotic parents were opposed to the marriage; their opposition, and Julian's inertia, brings the affair to its not entirely decisive end.

Mr. Peyton has done well with a difficult task in his first novel: he has written of adolescents, taking their doings and emotions at his characters' own evaluation, showing none of the condescension that might make a tale of youth more acceptable to an adult audience, and he has made these emotions and doings convincing and moving. His presentation of immature feelings without any *ex cathedra* asides does not partake of the awkwardness of its subject because he is capable of a prose which is sufficiently accomplished to attest to his own maturity and objectivity. One feels that his characters are presented with as much conviction as is possible. The relationship between Julian and Ann never seems other than a case of strong sexual attraction, so that the emotions arising from it, isolated as they remain, are of little more dramatic value than their source.

But if one will allow Mr. Peyton his slight subject, there can be little criticism of his handling of it; there are very few of the lapses in sensibility or writing that are almost inevitable in the first novel and none of the excess wordage. If the author's people are not memorable—by reason of their own weaknesses, which are close to those of mediocrity—he still has the gift of making them real, and that is something more than the knack of treating characters realistically.

GEOFFREY STONE

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THE BOOKMAN'S GUIDE TO FICTION

General

THE LOVELY LADY *by D. H. Lawrence* (Viking)
Seven short stories in Lawrence's best vein, including one little masterpiece, *Things*. Reviewed on page 290.

WHO GOES SAILING *by John Connell* (Little, Brown)
Four unhappy men on a yacht tell their life stories to a captain who carries them away from their decadent civilization. Well written modern fable. Reviewed on page 291.

TO THE NORTH *by Elizabeth Bowen* (Knopf)*
Another of Miss Bowen's subtle studies of character, this time of two young women responding with different intensity to the same egotistical man. Reviewed on page 292.

SHE WOULD AND SHE WOULDN'T *by Hélène Eliat* (Viking)*
Charming study of an indecisive young woman against a background of Paris, Italy, and Berlin. Recommended to admirers of Colette's novels. Reviewed on page 292.

SUBLUNARY *by L. E. Martin* (Dutton)*
A first novel well worth reading for its successful drawing of a neurotic clergyman and his simple wife. Reviewed on page 293.

MOTHER AND FOUR *by Isabel Wilder* (Coward-McCann)*
A young widow raises and educates her four children and launches them into life, in Miss Wilder's first novel. Good picture of an American college town and of four highly individual children. Reviewed on page 294.

ERIE WATER *by Walter D. Edmonds* (Little, Brown)*
The building of the Erie Canal is the vivid background for a love story of the early 1800's. Spirited and accurate details make this a fine historical novel. Reviewed on page 295.

HARDY PERENNIAL *by Helen Hull* (Coward-McCann)*
A modern version of *What Every Woman Knows* in which feminine realism is contrasted against masculine ineptitude, with complications. Reviewed on page 296.

THE KNIFE OF THE TIMES *by William Carlos Williams* (Dragon Press. $1.50)
Short stories of the contemporary scene, recorded in the contemporary and local idiom. Reviewed on page 297.

SAUNDERS OAK *by Robert Raynolds* (Harpers)*
Three women struggle for the affections of one man on a New England farm. Slightly over-romantic. Reviewed on page 298.

MADAME MAILLART *by Claude Aveline* (Dutton. $2.35)
Patients in a Swiss sanatorium and their affairs; lacking originality and conviction, this serves to recall too much and too wistfully *The Magic Mountain*. Reviewed on page 299.

LET THE HURRICANE ROAR *by Rose Wilder Lane* (Longmans, Green. $1.50)
A finely written, vivid story of two people and their struggling start on the prairie. Reviewed on page 300.

AWAKE *by Susan Prior* (Ballou. $1.50)
A portrait of a young English girl excessively in love with an American. Reviewed on page 301.

YE DRUNKEN DAMOZEL *by Simon Jesty* (Smith & Haas)
Exaggerated playfulness in an account of the affairs on two continents of the daughter of the keeper of an English pub. Reviewed on page 301.

THE BOAT OF LONGING *by O. E. Rölvaag* (Harpers)*
The story of a Norwegian boy who emigrates to America, by the author of *Giants in the Earth*. The last of the Rölvaag books to be translated. Reviewed on page 302.

BLACK CABIN *by Green Peyton* (Little, Brown)
Adolescents are treated at their own evaluation convincingly; a competent first novel about, unfortunately, some rather mediocre people. Reviewed on page 303.

DON JUAN AND THE WHEELBARROW *by L. A. G. Strong.* (Knopf)*
Sixteen varied short stories which indicate their author's force, range, and complete integrity.

THIS IS MY MAN *by W. B. Maxwell* (Dodd, Mead)*
He was all will and she was all passion, they fell in love at first sight, and it was a perfect marriage. And no matter how many times she deceived her husband, she never loved another soul but him. Believe it or not.

THE MIDDLE GENERATION *by J. D. Beresford* (Dutton)*
After a mild threat at beginning another *Of Human*

* All prices $2.00 except when followed by asterisk, in which case the price is $2.50.

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Bondage, this pedestrian tale goes on to achieve a sound interest in its own right by making an acceptable hero of a conscientious young man, represented as characteristic of the generation whose youth was mildly stirred by the Boer War and the Fabian Society. Humourless, but somehow effective.

A Marriage of Convenience *by Anne Green* (Dutton)*
An airy tale in which, with much spoofing and charm, a marriage of convenience turns out after all to have been made in Heaven.

Jenny Wren *by E. H. Young* (Harcourt, Brace)*
The author of *William* and *Miss Mole* writes a leisurely love story about the daughter of a gentleman and his wife from a lower class. *Jenny Wren* marries her mother's lodger after romancing around for chapters on the supposition that a gentleman's daughter deserves something better than a shopkeeping husband.

Fanny Penquite *by Edith Saunders* (Oxford. $1.75)
Exquisite fantasy about a little girl who died and went to a smug, literal, and pleasant Heaven. Illustrated in colours by the author. Perfect gift for fanciers of the precious.

Desire—Spanish Version *by Evelyn Eaton* (Morrow)
Paradore, French movie production centre, provides a jumbled setting for this wispy romance of helplessness seeking protective love. Excellence of character portrayal makes it plausible and absorbing; in fact, recalls *Chéri*.

The Mask of Silenus *by Babette Deutsch* (Simon & Schuster)
An amiable novelette which presents the main characteristics of Socrates and some of his coterie in a charming yet informative manner.

Detective and Mystery

The Father Brown Omnibus *by G. K. Chesterton* (Dodd, Mead)
Forty-two stories about the most engaging detective in fiction, in which the reader will also find Mr. Chesterton's very exciting opinions on almost everything.

Aldringham's Last Chance *by Arthur J. Rees* (Dodd, Mead)
Dear old England again, and the C. I. D. Ordinarily, murder is more satisfactory than theft, but this book doesn't miss a trick in connection with the disappearance of the pearls.

The Hidden Door *by Frank L. Packard* (Doubleday, Doran)
Impersonation again, in New York and Labrador. Ole Massa Packard has made a book out of St. Pierre et Miquelon business—and he's not talking about postage stamps. Writing's good, plot delightfully fantastic.

Genius in Murder *by E. R. Punshon* (Houghton, Mifflin)
A Scotland Yarder wherein Sergeant Bell outsmarts his superiors. There are about four corpses, which is all to the good. Impersonation is the chief device, but it's a little thin when you know that just a little poke in the murderer's ribs would have ended the story on page 30.

Atlantic Murder *by Frank H. Shaw* (McBride)
Smart alecks are wise after the fact when they read this one. Four souls take wing on the S. S. Ligerian, crack North Atlantic liner. The Captain's the only sleuth, and he does pretty well under the impetus of a burning love for the main female passenger.

Slade of the Yard *by Richard Essex* (McBride)
Clay Harrison, private investigator of international reputation, chases through pageants; what coroners describe as "unfortunate accidents"; larceny; murder; narcotic smuggling; and white slavery. Excitement and entertainment for seasoned readers.

The Circle of Death *by Charles J. Dutton* (Dodd, Mead)
Timothy Rogan and Harley Manners collaborate on the mystifying circumstances surrounding the death of their leading citizen. Author Dutton has devised a brand new method of death-dealing.

The Mystery of the Frightened Lady *by Edgar Wallace* (Doubleday, Doran)
Chief Inspector Tanner of Scotland Yard and his running-mate Sergeant Totty visit Marks Priory when Lord Lebanon's chauffeur is strangled. A typical Wallace thriller.

The Imperfect Crime *by Bruce Graeme* (Lippincott)
An English detective sent to Paris on an extradition case is thrown into close contact with Inspector Pierre Allain of the French Sûreté Générale. We are thus able to observe the reactions of the two totally unlike police officials. An extremely entertaining story.

The Crossroad Murder *by Georges Simenon* (Covici-Friede)
From the pen of Georges Simenon comes the third adventure of Inspector Maigret of the Paris Sûreté. He is busily engaged in tracking down the murderer of one Isaac Goldberg, a diamond merchant from Antwerp. Promising material from a young writer who threatens to be more prolific than Edgar Wallace.

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THE YOUNGER POETS

AN ANTHOLOGY OF THE YOUNGER POETS *edited by Oliver Wells* (CENTAUR PRESS. $3.00)

A REVOLUTION, fully recognized at last in Eliot's *The Waste Land*, has toppled over our Renaissance world; individualism is dead, the geniuses and the heroes are vanished from this earth; and the race of men has become more important than any one man. This is the tenor of Archibald MacLeish's preface to this anthology—"Nevertheless One Debt"—in which he points, with a refreshing directness, to a new beginning for the poets of our time.

> It is no longer A MAN against the stars. It is Mankind: that which has happened always to all men, not the particular incidents of particular lives. . . . The salt-sweating, robust, passionate, and at last death-devoured lives of all men always. Man in the invisible sea of time that drowns him. Man in the sun, on the earth, under the branches—and, as he breathes, time sweeping him away. . . .

This is to restate, with perhaps unfamiliar pessimism, a gospel which many poets have preached since the beginning of the nineteenth century: a gospel too vague for the Fascists and Marxists, too agnostic for the Anglo-Catholics of our day; a gospel which, I suspect, offers a new beginning only for Archibald MacLeish. Certainly in the poems which follow there is no sign of a new image of mankind.

But ought we to look for signs in contemporary anthologies? Signs have no meaning until some years after their appearance. This collection, for instance—though it is representative enough—does not point us in any special direction. A simple and straightforward lyric, appearing more often than one would expect, assures us that spring has already struggled into the waste land of poetry: but what kind of summer will follow it none of us can say.

This collection has a good deal of vitality in it, and some touches of brilliance. It begins with Hart Crane and ends with Macknight Black. Both have been sufficiently discussed to make further comment unnecessary. Of the other thirty-six, there are six who seem to me to stand apart—David Cornel de Jong, Frances Frost, R. Ellsworth Larsson, David McCord, William Faulkner, George Dillon.

I put de Jong first because, in point of appearance, he is a very young poet, and because there is more promise in him than almost any other poet I have lately read. This promise, it is true, is marred—and may easily stay marred—by a lamentable indirection: but read his *Looking On Silence* in this collection; there is an astonishing gift in it.

Both Miss Frost and Mr. Larsson are mature poets, and might for that reason have been left out of this anthology. As for Miss Frost, she works in a very limited field: the world of nature, as she sees it, is strict, nor does it wear many faces for her: beyond its boundaries are all kinds of things, savage and passionate, which she prefers not to recognize. She uses the same material so often that it is in danger of becoming threadbare, but at her best her vision is intense and singular: *To Losers* and *Return* in this collection are worth anybody's reading.

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Mr. Larsson, it seems to me, is a purely intuitive, or—if you like—irrational poet, with one of the most astonishing lyric gifts among contemporary Americans; but the real values of his work have too often been missed altogether. He seems, like Webster, to be "much possessed by death"; and all the imagery of the last decade—dust, bones, sand, decay, and so forth—throngs into his work. But beneath all this there is a recurring statement, which in these days might be called the last statement of human unreason. Another word for it is faith. From his intricate and inward music no short quotation can be detached without violence: but this—

> yet and you smile
> and your eye encloses me
> all wasted acreage is flame
> of bud bud buds and a bursting leaf—sound
> stinging high air alive with bird bird bird
> and the birds' cry—
> singing all singing
> and caroling caroling there in the rare
> and the rarer air the higher and the high
> ice-clear fire of your name

may be offered in evidence. Here is a form animated by faith, or unreason, or whatever you may choose to call that instinct in man which clings blindly to the chances of survival beyond decay. In poetry it has always taken the shape of incantation, and as incantation Larsson's poetry obtains its real strength and beauty.

William Faulkner's poetry is new to me, which is no doubt a confession of ignorance: it also comes as a very pleasant surprise. It is almost entirely sensuous; its thinking is simple, its imagery warm; and the few demands it makes upon us are mild ones.

> Winter is gone: snow but an old wives' tale.
> Winds have forgotten it. Poplar and alder
> Lean on skies in slow conflagration, golder
> Than April sun. The young year grows pale
> With an ecstasy of light. Star and hill
> Perplex each other, apart and together. . . .

"Ecstasy", you will see, is used without ecstasy, and the whole tone is reflective, the tone of a poet who has found the face of the world agreeable; but work of this kind is a sign of health in the whole body poetic: and for that reason I recommend Mr. Faulkner.

George Dillon in *Who Track the Truth* shows a talent which is already filling out into something more than talent, and David McCord's poem *The Crows* has one or two passages of remarkable beauty. Anthony Wrynn's *He Wove His Nest in the Portico* is pleasing; there is something to be said for Kimball Flaccus and Noel F. Busch; in Geoffrey Stone's *The Idol that Spoke in Babylon* there is evidence of a very good mind which has yet to prove that poetry is its right medium; and Lynn Riggs, after taking up three pages to no good purpose, surprises us with the assurance of *Endless Legend*. Kay Boyle could easily become an important minor poet, but her poems still read like a laboratory experiment from which nothing will come but a futile explosion.

No contemporary anthology, I suppose, can get along without some jargon in it. In his foreword Mr. Wells suggests that poetry at present can only "lie under the sofa and snarl a little". I am not sure that I understand this, but it will do quite nicely for several poets who have made their way into this collection—Richard Thoma, Alexander Wilder, George Whitsett, Leslie Powell, Forrest Anderson. Two lines—"My song destroys the day" from Mr. Powell, and "I wear a crown of sores" from Mr. Anderson—are so apt that they will spare the critic the necessity of troubling these gentlemen any further. But don't let them put you off this anthology: it is well collected, and well worth buying.

GEORGE DANGERFIELD

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AT A GLANCE

THE DECADE OF ILLUSION *by Maurice Sachs* (KNOPF. $3.50)

THE great personalities of a time, says Maurice Sachs, are magicians who put their contemporaries under a spell of illusion and in particular ravish the youth of the country with their ideas and their special moral tone. The four giants of his young manhood in post-War Paris were Cocteau, Maritain, Picasso, and Max Jacob, and to each of them he devotes a whole chapter of his book. Their influence seems to have been like the influence of Pater and Swinburne in England; the society in this book is startlingly unlike the nearly coëval group in *The Sun Also Rises*. Framing these four portraits is a little panorama of Paris in the years after the War, wherein, sketched briefly but with enthusiasm, appear painters, poets, musicians, actors, critics, publishers, impresarios and all their works, in bewildering numbers, not forgetting Chanel. The index makes the work a very handy little guide to the period, and the many illustrations from snapshots are an additional interest.

THE MEMOIRS OF SIR ROBERT SIBBALD *edited by Francis Paget Hett* (OXFORD. $3.00)

FOUNDER of the Royal College of Physicians at Edinburgh, distinguished for his researches in medicine and Scottish antiquities, Sir Robert Sibbald is chiefly interesting for his transcription from a now lost original of the text of the *Conversations of Ben Jonson with Drummond of Hawthornden*. The authenticity of the *Conversations* has lately been questioned; and one section of the present book is devoted to a refutation of charges that Sibbald, who would seem to have no conceivable reason for doing so, forged them. His interests were definitely scientific, his character was severely upright, and his patriotism—the motive set forth for the alleged forgery—could scarcely have been so masterful a passion as to make him, in the midst of all his activities, go to the incredible trouble of concocting such a literary fake. The *Memoirs* are a simple account of his life written in 1695, evidently for family archives. They are moderately interesting in themselves, and take on a reflected glory from the fact that Boswell owned the original manuscript, now also lost.

QUEEN ELIZABETH *by Mona Wilson* (APPLETON. $2.00)

THIS new volume in the valuable series of Appleton Biographies is a straightforward study with a minimum of interpretation. Miss Wilson has done an admirable job of compressing much material into the required small space, particularly in her use of quotations from the Queen's speeches and from contemporary letters, choosing those which contain not only essential facts but details that show the colour of the period. Strongly recommended for the average literate person who needs a perspective.

THE BIRTH OF THE NATIONS *by Valeriu Marcu* (VIKING. $3.75)

THIS is a fascinating narrative of Europe threading her way through that "polychrome labyrinth of spiritual and material, individual and social, ecclesiastic and secular interests" toward the triumph, at the Peace of Westphalia, of modern capitalistic nationalism over the unity of the Church. The author shows us that national politics emerged from the supra-national character of the struggle between revolutionary Protestantism and conservative Catholicism. Primarily concerned with the philosophical implications of his subject, Mr. Marcu has made few concessions to the "popular non-fiction" type of writing, though he does not neglect the dramatic possibilities of such figures as Cam-

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panella, the mad monk, Richelieu, Father Joseph, Wallenstein, Pope Urban the Second, and those other fantastic actors who crossed the European stage during the century and a half before the settlement of 1648. The brilliance of the period, the lucidity of the treatment, and even the excellence of the translation will captivate the casual reader; the book is also valuable as an analysis of the origin and function of the modern state.

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY STUDIES *edited by Robert Shafer* (PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS. $3.50)

THREE graduate students of the University of Cincinnati, Benjamin Townley Spencer, Mary Edith Cochnower, and Dan Gibson, Jr., present, under the editorship of Professor Shafer, essays on Massinger, Ford, and Samuel Butler, respectively. These were chosen as the best of fifty-five essays prepared for a course in Seventeenth Century England, and their common purpose is to map out and, to a restricted extent, to trace the affiliations of the dominant ideas of the writers in question. Professor Shafer is to be congratulated: the result of his project is interesting to anyone who cares for the operation of ideas in literature.

THE PEARL *rendered in modern verse by Stanley Perkins Chase* (OXFORD. $2.50)
THE PEARL (*Bowdoin Edition*) (BRUCE HUMPHRIES. $1.50)

The Pearl is an English poem by an anonymous fourteenth-century poet, who may also be the author of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight,* since both pieces are included, with two other poems, in the one manuscript. The language of *The Pearl* is a Midland or Yorkshire dialect, and that coupled with the difficulties of Middle English has denied it the audience which is not reluctant to attempt Chaucer in the original. Its one hundred and one stanzas are largely occupied with the familiar mediaeval dream-vision—in this case inspired by the loss of a "privy perle wythouten spot"—and though interpretations vary enough to have called forth a small body of scholarly literature, the poem in the main is a celebration of purity. Mr. Chase's rendering is prefaced by an enlightening essay. There can be no carping at the details of his work; the one criticism will perforce seem subjective: that his version lacks the poetic and visionary fervour of the original. The Bowdoin Edition is by the members of the Chaucer course at that college and is free of scholarly impedimenta and obsolete characters. By using the two books in conjunction, the average reader will be able to perceive the beauties of the lovely old piece without excessive difficulty.

THE VICTORIAN MORALITY OF ART *by Henry Ladd* (LONG & SMITH. $3.00)

A DETAILED critical exposition of Ruskin's æsthetics and the influences which shaped his ideas of beauty, moral value, and truth. The method is of paraphrase, chiefly from *Modern Painters,* with comment, calling attention especially to unresolved contradictions of thought and Ruskin's method of "bridging" them. These are especially interesting because they show how universal a Victorian Ruskin was. His power was derived not only from his eloquence and the force of character behind it, but also from his ability to select striking and congenial ideas, and, disregarding incongruity, to construct them into an effective instrument of authority.

THE MEANING OF MODERN SCULPTURE *by R. H. Wilenski* (HOLT. $3.00)

MR. WILENSKI subtitles this book *An essay on some original sculpture of the present day together with some account of the methods of professional disseminators of the notion that certain sculptors in ancient Greece were the first and the last to achieve perfection in sculpture.* He is highly suspicious of Greek gifts to us when they are in the form of sculpture and does not hesitate to call "ninepins" the works which crowd our museums. He points out that nothing by Phidias, Polyclitus, Praxiteles and others of great name exists today. What we have, he says, are uninspired copies, fakes, and pastiches by archeologists. But Mr. Wilenski has more objections than that to Greek sculpture: the Greeks were too naturalistic and they did not cut directly in stone. Mr. Wilenski demands that sculpture to be good be "an aspect and a

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symbol of contemporary culture", so one gathers that it is the humanism of Greek culture he objects to, since Greek sculpture is very plainly an aspect and symbol of it. A further task of the sculptor "is not to imitate or dramatize fragments of nature but to symbolise the formal principles of life", which Mr. Wilenski sees being done in works that are, variously, dropsical, acromegalic, foetal, or, like Gaudier-Brzeska's *Brass Toy*, amusing but artistically no higher than textile patterns. It is, nevertheless, to Mr. Wilenski's credit that writing about an art which today has no place but in the studio he is always lively and readable.

LIBERALISM IN THE SOUTH *by Virginius Dabney* (THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA PRESS. $3.50)

SENTIMENTALISM and superficiality for a long period flavoured the native discussion of what was too frequently termed "our beloved Southland". Of late, however, there have been more objective studies, fragmentary or specialized, treating various aspects of the life and thought of the South; and those Southerners who subordinate sweetness to light or who venerate their heritage beyond the point of becoming professional Confederates welcome the more candid analyses of the Southern scene. Now at last, in a large and thorough volume Virginius Dabney, a Southerner, has presented the results of considerable research, primary and secondary, on a topic of perennial interest. Such a book, issued by a Southern university press, thus marks a definite epoch.

Mr. Dabney realizes the difficulty in defining liberalism. He thinks of it as constructive-destructive, concerned with a relative freedom and the dignity and worth of the individual, at times libertarian, often humanitarian. The history of the South he divides into four periods: the era of Jefferson, that of Calhoun, the period from the Civil War to the present century, and the New South. The fields of politics, race relations, religion, labour and industry, education, women's rights, and literature and journalism are included in the historical survey and the critical analysis. The ample bibliography suggests many by-paths to the serious student.

EXTRAORDINARY POPULAR DELUSIONS AND THE MADNESS OF CROWDS *by Charles Mackay* (PAGE. $5.00)

THIS work, which first appeared in 1841, deals with various phenomena of mass madness, and other phenomena that do not seem to fall quite so aptly under the book's title. Among the former are the Mississippi Scheme of John Law, the South Sea Bubble, the Tulipomania, and several terrors over the imminent arrival of Doomsday; among the latter are alchemy, the Crusades, and fortune-telling—all three of which, even to the extent they were delusions, do not seem deserving of the epithet extraordinary. But since Mackay collected much interesting material on all his subjects and presented it in a manner that is not without touches of humour, the distinction may perhaps be accounted a bit pedantic; at any rate, it should keep no one from a very engaging book. There is a foreword by Bernard M. Baruch, the financier, whom, the publishers say, the book has saved millions of dollars.

MOTHER SEA *by Felix Riesenberg* (CLAUDE KENDALL. $2.50)

CAPTAIN RIESENBERG has written much of the sea, with the understanding of one who knows the great waters, and with a choice compounding of romance and ruffianism. *Mother Sea* presents both elements; indeed is almost too sophisticated to preserve the savour of the former quality for the mere landsman. It contains plenty of marine lore and deals with American ships of that splendid era when the masts of the great clippers threw shadows across South Street, in New York, from South Ferry to the Brooklyn Bridge, in the latter part of the last century. Real names appear; we hear again of such giant sailing vessels as the noble *Henry B. Hyde*, the majestic *Roanoke* and the lordly *A. J. Fuller*, all Bath built and the finest of their kind, routed around Cape Horn to California and Hawaii. The love story is not pronounced enough to obscure the seamanship, which is of the first quality; indeed it seems somewhat superfluous. The author can load and sail his ships better than he can entwine garlands.

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TYPOGRAPHY, ART, AND DESIGN

ORPHEUS: MYTHS OF THE WORLD *by Padraic Colum. Decorations by Boris Artzybasheff* (MACMILLAN. $2.50)

THIS re-telling of the best known stories of a dozen mythologies offered all the material for the making of a handsome book. Drawings well suited to combination with type, a text susceptible to typographic experiment, and the uncommon proportions acceptable in this type of book, all contributed to the designer's opportunity. He started by selecting: a good face of type and the wrong paper to print it on (or vice-versa!); a second, inferior, and not very harmonious type for the headings; and a larger size, in every dimension of the book, than is necessary or pleasant. The printer then did him a thoroughly bad job, starting with a 48-point wrong-font letter on the title page and proceeding through 360 pages of slovenly presswork.

The book is a big thing for the price. The pity is that it is not a *good* thing instead. Smaller, with decent margins instead of extravagant ones, it would have been more agreeable to hold, and the publisher would have saved enough to pay for proper printing.

The illustrator had a good opportunity himself—but a harder problem. He has managed to put into his decorations enough of the ideas of the myths, but little of their spirit. He crowds his drawings with figures and motifs until his ingenuity becomes a vice, and obtains his results by such obvious tricks that he gets all effects and no effect. The drawings, however skillful, seem to me as laboured and mechanical, as graceless and as humourless, as could have been inspired by the dullest of texts—which this one certainly is not.

CHAUCER'S TROILUS AND CRESSIDA *Translated by George Philip Krapp. Wood engravings by Eric Gill* (RANDOM HOUSE. $3.50)

THIS modern version of Chaucer's long narrative poem is not only delightful reading, but, according to the scholars, is faithful to the spirit and content of the original. Eric Gill's simple and sensitive engravings are the perfect complement to the text. It is only to be regretted that poor presswork has somewhat weakened the power of his line and the values of his masses. Publishers use so much soft spongey paper these days, that it seems as if the larger book printers are afraid to use plenty of good black ink, even when, as in this book, a good paper is supplied. The type, too, is on the weak side, and lacks the vigorous colour and free drawing of the decorations. The volume as a whole, however, is a satisfactory piece of book-making, and an excellent item on the Random House list of carefully produced trade editions.

MILTON'S L'ALLEGRO AND IL PENSEROSO *Woodcuts by Rudolph Ruzicka* (THE ASHLAR PRESS.)

IN RECENT years the activity of the professional publisher in the field of the limited edition has had both good and bad influences on the private presses. It has certainly stimulated the amateurs to greater efforts and inspired the founding of many new imprints, but it has also inspired much elaborate and over-ambitious printing, a poor substitute for that simplicity which is the greatest charm of the product of the private press.

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A pleasant exception is the Ashlar Press, operated by August and Maurice Heckscher, two youthful printers of Long Island. They have produced several small books in the best private press tradition. The present work is in two tiny volumes, printed and bound with the most careful workmanship, and designed with a restraint which many of their elders might well emulate.

Harrison of Paris

AMONG the most interesting books coming to this department have been those received during the past year or so with the imprint of Harrison of Paris. Monroe Wheeler, one of our more useful expatriates, is the director of this enterprise and the designer of most of the books. Although his taste is often "artistic" in the worst sense and his typographic effects too laboured to be completely satisfying, the books as a whole have a freshness and variety which is most stimulating. The illustrations contribute much of this quality, but Mr. Wheeler's ideas are in themselves original and diverting. The seven volumes received were produced in five European printing houses. They are distributed here by Minton, Balch.

One of the most satisfactory volumes is *The Wild West*, seven stories by Bret Harte ($5.00), with spirited pen-and-wash drawings in full colour by Pierre Falké. The book is not only handsome to look at, but has agreeable flexible paper and a stout binding as well. As much cannot be said for the *Fables of Aesop* ($4.00), which is a thoroughly impractical piece of bookmaking. Its illustrations, however, are by Alexander Calder, one of the most amusing and talented young American artists, and with the delightful translation of Sir Roger L'Estrange they make a charming book.

Prosper Mérimée's *Carmen* ($5.00), the source of the well-known opera, is another of the well-illustrated editions, and contains reproductions of monochrome watercolors by Maurice Barraud. Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* ($7.50) is less satisfactory. The wash drawings, by Sir Francis Rose, are too casual and formless, and the typographical arrangement is bad, although the type face is a good one. With the exception of *The Death of Madame*, by Mme de La Fayette ($2.50), a small pamphlet of no distinction, the Byron seems to me the least successful of the seven books.

A Calendar of Saints for Unbelievers, by Glenway Wescott ($6.00), an absorbing assemblage of several hundred holy legends, is printed in Van Krimpen's fine new Romanée type, with decorations by Pavel Tchelitchew. *A Typographical Commonplace Book* ($3.00) is a collection of two score quotations, from Plato to Cocteau, set in at least as many types and styles. The variety of these faces, and Mr. Wheeler's ingenuity in arranging them, should be fascinating to both typographer and layman.

NOTE

THE eleventh exhibition of Fifty Books of the Year, selected annually by the American Institute of Graphic Arts, is on view at the New York Public Library until March fifth, and will visit the principal American cities during the year. The books were selected from six hundred volumes submitted by 145 publishers. Thirty-six of them are regular trade editions, which makes the show even more interesting than usual, and indicates that the Institute's efforts in behalf of good book-making are increasingly effective in the proper quarters.

ROBERT JOSEPHY

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